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# THRICE THROUGH THE DARK CONTINENT

THROUGH A CONGO FOREST

# THRICE THROUGH THE DARK CONTINENT

## A Record of Journeyings across Africa during the years 1913-16

BY

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# CHAPTER I

## KUMASI AND ITS HEROES

I rather would entreat thy company
To see the wonders of the world abroad
Than, living dully sluggardiz'd at home,
Wear out thy youth with shapeless idleness.

SHAKESPEARE.

### *Departure*

IT was a peaceful morning in the late autumn of 1913 when, at Waterloo Station, I took my seat in the Dover Express. A knot of South African friends had gathered on the platform to wish me *bon voyage*, and when I had secured my last glimpse of waving hats and handkerchiefs, and realised that the last link was severed which bound me to home and kindred, I found it impossible to subdue a feeling of inward trepidation at the thought that I was now irrevocably committed to an undertaking which would absorb two, and it might be three, years of my life. Congenial companionship would no doubt have dispelled the vapours of melancholy, but *compagnon de voyage* I had none, nor indeed had I been particularly desirous to find one. Firmly lodged in my mind was a sentence from Drummond's *Tropical Africa*: 'It is not always easy to find a companion for such a project, and the climate is so pestilential that when two go, you and your friend are simply nursing each other time about, and the expedition never gets on.' Upon this principle I acted, and though at times in the lone bush the feeling of solitude was overwhelming, I still venture to think that the course I pursued was, all things considered, the wisest.

The *Professor Woermann*, which bore me pleasantly and prosperously to the West African Coast, I found to be one of the newest and best equipped boats of the Line to which it belongs. Its apportionments—large, airy dining-saloon, cool and lofty sitting-room, with immense sliding doors, permitting

the admission of the maximum of air, and a comfortable and artistically decorated smoking-room—are little short of palatial. Roomy cabins, adequate lavatory accommodation, and a gymnasium to keep the muscles supple, contributed towards the general health and happiness. A well-stocked library, containing volumes in English, German and French, afforded that light and varied nourishment which the jaded ocean palate alone can tolerate. We were favoured by smooth seas, cooling breezes and the pleasurable excitement of frequent calls at islands and ports along the route, and before I well realised it our journey drew to its close, and I found myself in the roaring and occasionally dangerous surf that beats upon the Gold Coast. Guided by a skilful helmsman, and propelled by the vigorous strokes of a swarthy crew, we negotiated the landing in safety, and after an absence in Europe of seven days short of a year, I stood once again upon the soil of the Continent which gave me birth.

### *First Glimpses of the African Forest*

Seccondee, the port of call for the hinterland of the Gold Coast, is connected by a railway, one hundred and sixty-eight miles in length, with Kumasi (otherwise Coomassie), the capital of the whilom kingdom of the Ashanti. On leaving Seccondee the train takes an immediate plunge into the depths of the primeval forest, from which it does not once emerge until Kumasi is reached. On previous journeys in the distant south—in the Kalahari, in Rhodesia, in Nyasaland—I had frequently passed through tropical and subtropical forests, but never through anything so vast and so dense as this. The newcomer finds himself in a world which hitherto he could only reach by a wild flight of the imagination. Sitting entranced at the carriage window, he gazes as in a dream at the phantasmagoria that flits past. Tall trees, their tops wellnigh invisible from the angle at which they are viewed; stately palms, nodding their fronded tufts to the gentle breeze; groups of graceful bamboos; a closely interwoven undergrowth, filling up the interstices between the trees, and forming a barrier through which no human being, and only the most powerful animals can force a way; and over all, like that charity which covereth a multitude of sins, a wealth of convolvulus, garlanding the branches, festooning the trunks,

and bedecking decaying stocks with a garment of youthful beauty. Occasionally we glide past open clearings where the industry of man has triumphed over the forces of nature, where trees have been felled and burnt to ashes, the soil turned and tilled, and plentiful harvests gathered. We catch fleeting glimpses of villages embowered in banana-groves, with rectangular huts, not infrequently roofed—*proh pudor!*—with galvanised iron. We see natives clothed in decent apparel, and seemingly prosperous, and we have time to make a note of the cattle and goats which constitute their wealth. And then, in a moment, the forest has engulfed us once again, the traces of man's occupation vanish,

> And like this unsubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a rack behind.

I remember how as a child I revelled in the pictures which appeared in the pages of that famous old journal, the *Illustrated London News*. Some of the earliest which I can still call to mind depicted scenes from the Ashanti War of 1874. Very vivid must have been the impressions which forty years have not been able to delete—the dangers and difficulties of the march through a trackless forest, where roads had to be built, bridges constructed, camps erected, a long base-line guarded, and dangers from treacherous enemies and stealthy beasts of prey encountered. The worst enemy which the little force met with was disease. Malaria and dysentery incapacitated seventy per cent. of the fighting line. One who passed through the whole of this campaign gives us the following reminiscences: 'Pestilence killed ten men for every one knocked over by a bullet. Now, when more than thirty years have passed, I look back on all the toil and sweat and sickness of that time, and the picture I see is a sad but splendid one—men, the best I ever met in my long service, toiling on, despite of fever and dysentery, over narrow forest paths; some of them worn to skeletons, all with drawn haggard features; down with fever one day, staggering along the dark path the next day; eating wretched food; fighting, urging, wrestling with recalcitrant carriers; streaming with perspiration at all times; yet always putting a good face upon the worst ills that fortune sent them.'[1]

[1] *Sir William Butler: An Autobiography.* London, 1911.

*A Walk round Kumasi*

The journey which occupied Sir Garnet Wolseley and his heroes nearly four months was accomplished by us in a single day. On my arrival at Kumasi I was met at the station by a representative of the Basle Mission, whose guest I was during my four days' stay. Kumasi, with its railway and its telegraph, its macadamised streets and its commodious European stores, is a vivid illustration of the impact of Western civilisation upon African barbarism. The roads leading to the capital and the streets of the town itself are thronged with natives, who represent every stage of sartorial evolution, from the piccaninny who is robed in innocence to the Government clerk with his smart white suit, straw hat and yellow boots. The great majority of men and women are clothed in cheap cotton prints, which are gracefully thrown across the shoulder and tied around the waist. I saw every kind of facial type—the handsome, Semitic cast of the Hausa, the ugly snout of the Kroo-boy, and the thick-lipped prognathous countenance of the negro. The women are laden with baskets of farm produce which they are bearing to the daily market. Children hang about their skirts, and are treated with an affection which I found particularly noticeable. In yonder gully, through which meanders a stream of sluggish water, we see a number of stalwart, semi-nude men engaged in making bricks, which are destined for the huge two-storied edifices of the European, while just beyond the stream we descry a native village in all the primitive simplicity of clay walls and grass roof. As we ponder on the contrast a bicycle bell sounds its warning note, and we step aside to see a native, clad only in the scantiest loin-cloth, dash past on a machine that has been manufactured at Coventry or Sheffield. Public baths there are none, but at every pool and stream around Kumasi one may see, at almost any hour of the day, numbers of men, women, and children performing their necessary ablutions.

As I slowly stepped down the street, the inevitable camera depending from my shoulder, I was accosted by a native clad in the most irreproachable European fashion.

'Good morning, sir,' he said, pausing before me with a somewhat deprecatory air.

'Good morning.'

'Dentist, sir?'—this with a most engaging smile.

'Dentist!' I exclaimed, unwilling to believe that an Ashanti native knew what a dentist was.

'Yes, sir: dentist, sir,' tapping his tooth in a manner which left no possible doubt as to his meaning.

'Well no, my friend, I am not a dentist.'

'Sorry, sir, very sorry, but'—with a glance at my harmless camera—'I thought you came about that tooth palaver.'

My steps now carried me in the direction of the public market. It was a busy, indeed a crowded scene. Long tables, sheltered for the most part from the broiling sun, exhibited for sale every possible commodity which man could put to any use, and a great many which could be put to no possible use that I could conceive. There were cotton goods of all descriptions, leather goods from the Hausa states in the north, sewing machines, beadwork in great variety, knives and forks of brittle make, crockery, kitchen utensils, every kind of native produce, salt, tobacco, antimony, luscious fruit from the garden, and fresh meat from the shambles. The din that arose from hundreds of chaffering women and hoarse-throated men was deafening. This was the first, but by no means the last, of the great African markets which I visited, and which form so characteristic a feature in the economic life of Central Africa and North-central Africa, but are almost wholly absent beyond the eighth degree of south latitude.

To the Mohammedan section of the population of Kumasi is assigned a separate residential quarter, which is known as Sango. Here the followers of the prophet put up their own dwellings, kill their own meat, perform their own ceremonial ablutions, and live their own life according to Koranic precept. These Hausas are a peaceable, industrious, bargain-loving people—the Jews of the African continent. Time was when the Ashanti potentate forbade these traders from the north to enter or pass through his dominions. But the Pax Britannica has changed all that, and Kumasi is no longer a reserve for the Ashanti only. There is a steady drift of Mohammedans towards the south. All the larger towns of the Gold Coast, Togoland, and Southern Nigeria, to speak only of the areas which I have visited, have their Sangos or Mohammedan quarters. The Ashanti people have not, as

yet, been Islamised, and there exist reasons which lead them to view the Hausas with suspicion, if not with positive antipathy; but these reasons are slowly disappearing, and within a generation, unless the Christian Church is alive to its responsibility, the banner of the Crescent will wave over the forests and fields of the Ashanti country.

In close proximity to the Sango are situated the public shambles. The neighbourhood is odoriferous to a degree, and a visit can only be safely undertaken when one is suffering from a bad cold and the olfactory nerves are in temporary abeyance. To make the scene still more repugnant, flocks of vultures haunt the spot, blackening with their numbers the branches of neighbouring trees, swooping down upon the offal, waddling across the pegged-out hides, and staring insolently at the indignant visitor who tries to shoo them away. The vulture, to us South Africans, is a bird of evil fame, which we always picture as following doomed caravans in the waterless desert, gloating over the miseries of dying animals, and gorging itself upon their dead carcases. But since I have seen West African cities I am constrained to confess that the vulture may play a more useful though hardly less loathsome part, that, namely, of general scavenger to a community that has yet to learn the elements of urban sanitation and hygiene. Standing one night upon the balcony of the Basle Mission Factory, the local missionary, Mr. Jost, pointed out to me the so-called *Apete Seni*, or 'Vultures' Abode,' which is now occupied by the yard of the Factory. 'This spot,' said my informant, 'was one of the recognised places at which, under the old Ashanti régime, human sacrifices were performed. The same ill-omened birds which now frequent the shambles used at that time to glut themselves at this very spot on human victims.'

### *A Page of History*

Let me now endeavour to redeem the promise of the heading to this chapter, and tell something about the earliest missionary enterprise in Kumasi. The scene shifts for a few moments to a station of the Basle Mission named Anum, lying about one hundred and fifty miles to the east. This advance-post of Christianity was occupied in 1869 by a Swiss called Ramseyer, his wife, and a colleague of the name of Kühne. In that year disquieting rumours reached the faithful workers

at this remote and lonely station. Kofi Karikari, the tyrant king of the warlike Ashanti, had determined to extend the bounds of his kingdom by force of arms. Under command of an able general, Adu Bofo, he sent a well-disciplined army to harry the country to the east and south-east. Bad news flies fast, and the missionaries learnt that the Ashanti army was rapidly nearing Anum. The villagers, cumbered with but few earthly possessions, packed their household goods upon their heads and took to flight. The missionaries, on the other hand, held it to be their duty to remain and protect the property of the Mission. Moreover, flight, in the circumstances in which they found themselves, was almost an impossibility. They possessed no means of conveyance, and Mrs. Ramseyer held in her arms an infant of but a few months old.

Soon the dreaded storm burst upon them. The station was attacked and gutted. Ramseyer and his associates received instructions to leave their home immediately. They obeyed. Going into the house for the last time, they knelt down and commended themselves to God, and, rising from their knees, declared themselves ready to undertake the journey. And what a journey that was! The sun beat down upon them with tropical fierceness; tormented as they were by a burning thirst, they attempted to cool their parched tongues in muddy water; Mrs. Ramseyer was deprived of her umbrella, and one of her shoes was lost in a marsh; the food provided consisted of hard and indigestible maize; and the callous soldiers who guarded them mocked at their miseries, and taunted them in words like these: 'The Ashanti have got the better of the white man; take care of your heads when we reach Kumasi.' When they were placed before Adu Bofo, that unfeeling man tore Mrs. Ramseyer's dress from her body and bore it away as a gift for one of his own harem. Mr. Kühne received the most cruel treatment. His captors stripped him of his shoes and socks and forced his feet into heavy irons. His pockets were rudely searched and emptied. Seeing Ramseyer approaching, he attempted to convey to his keeping a woollen shawl, as a covering for the babe, but it was snatched from his hands. The Ramseyers were also placed in chains, but these were subsequently removed, after they had addressed a dignified remonstrance to the general.

Day after day the unfortunate missionaries were driven

forward, without rest, without mercy, almost without food. Their own privations they could endure, but not those of their poor infant, who, deprived of suitable nourishment, weakened visibly from hour to hour. Once their hearts were gladdened by the kindness of a native woman, who took compassion upon the starving child and supplied them with a little eggs and milk. But it was already too late to save the babe's life. Let a page from the father's diary tell of the anguish that filled the parents' hearts: 'His little wasted frame, sharp features, and sunken eyes will long remain as painful pictures in our memory. Happily no severe pain tried the fragile, worn-out body; weakness and intense thirst were his chief sufferings, making him perpetually crave for drink, especially at night. When I begged some palm-oil for a night-light, saying that my babe was dying, "No, no, he must not die," said the bystanders, "the king will not allow it." At length the end came. He gave one last look of silent intensity, as if he were trying to say good-bye, and all was over.' Covered only with palm branches, the little body was laid to rest in a peaceful grave under two banana trees. 'He calls to us,' wrote his father, '"Do not forget Ashanti," and his grave is a token that the healing Cross shall one day reach that far-off land.'

When the captives had reached a village that lay but four hours distant from Kumasi, they received information that the king could not yet receive them. Little did they imagine that their detention at this spot, within such easy reach of the capital, would run to six months. Yet so it was. Upon one pretext or another the king refused to grant them audience. Meanwhile, though they had a sufficiency of food, they were otherwise in a state of extreme destitution. Mrs. Ramseyer had to beg for the loan of a comb and scissors, in order to repair her apparel and render herself reasonably tidy. After the lapse of months the courageous woman was able to secure a dress, to take the place of the garment of which Adu Bofo had forcibly deprived her.

### *The City of Blood*

Ultimately, in April 1870, the missionaries were summoned to Kumasi. They were admitted into the presence of the king, who would give no permission for their departure, but

in other respects allowed them all reasonable liberty. But their captivity was to last for a much longer period than they could ever have thought possible. Four years long did they remain in the power of the Ashanti potentate. What experiences they passed through! What sights of blood they witnessed! What agonies of heart they must have felt for the victims of heathen superstition and cruel custom! Kumasi was a veritable city of blood. The most insignificant misdemeanours were liable to be punished by death. To let a drop of palm wine fall upon the pavement, to break an egg through carelessness or mischance, to carry a European pipe through the streets of Kumasi, not to flee into hiding immediately one of the innumerable wives of the king appeared—all these were misdeeds punishable by a cruel death. Terrible tortures were visited upon the man who was found guilty of murder. First a knife was thrust through both his cheeks, making it impossible for him to fling objurgations at his executioners. A cord was then bound about his neck and he was dragged to the market-place. From this stage the tortures to which he was subjected increased in intensity until the evening. Great gashes were inflicted upon every part of his body; an arm was severed from the trunk, and the unhappy victim was compelled to dance in that mutilated condition before the king; and if, through pain or loss of blood, he failed to perform with vigour, burning firebrands were applied to stimulate him to greater activity. Finally, at sundown, the great drum of the king boomed forth its signal, and the sword of the executioner put a merciful end to a series of tortures that baffle description.

Terrible also were the scenes witnessed on the day of the annual Feast of Death, which was celebrated at Bantama, a town which I visited, and which lies but a few minutes' walk outside Kumasi. Here was situated the cemetery which held the remains of the old kings of the Ashanti. And hither, once a year, in the month of February, came the reigning king, to pay homage to the bones of his ancestors. What form did the act of homage take? Listen. A number of innocent men were designated as the victims for the great occasion. They were slaughtered, and their blood gathered into large bowls; and with these bowls in his hands the king proceeded to wash the skulls and skeletons of his deceased ancestors. During the whole day long the death-drums sounded inces-

santly. Two beats upon the drum sounded the awful warning, 'Death, death.' Three beats gave the command, 'Cut it off' (*i.e.* the victim's head). One final beat informed the breathless crowd, 'It is done!'

### *Deliverance*

During the four years of their detention, Ramseyer and Kühne vexed their righteous souls in helpless contemplation of inhumanities such as these. But they did not fail to make their witness heard. In season and out of season they proclaimed the gospel of God's grace. But the message fell on deaf ears. The king tolerated but did not encourage them, and the indifference of the ruler was reflected in the apathetic attitude of the people. The time of the Ashanti had not yet come: the measure of the iniquity of this kingdom of blood was not yet full. It is impossible, in the brief space of a travel-sketch, to give further particulars of the experiences of the captive missionaries. Suffice it to say that they finally achieved freedom only when Wolseley and his little force marched on Kumasi in 1874. Kühne indeed was liberated at an earlier stage. He had suffered severely from fever and dysentery, and Karikari was persuaded into granting permission for his departure. He reached the English camp in a condition of great exhaustion. Henry M. Stanley, who was attached to Wolseley's expedition as correspondent of the *New York Herald*, makes the following entry in his journal: 'Jan. 15, 1874.—Yesterday great excitement prevailed in the camp, due to the appearance of a pale-faced captive, the shadow of a consumptive person. It was missionary Kühne.' A few days later the Ramseyers too were set at liberty. They were safely guided to the English camp, where they received a warm welcome from the British officers. Within a few days they reached the coast, from which Ramseyer wrote on the 3rd February: 'It is a dream no longer! It is a glad reality! We are free! Yes, our faithful God can still work wonders; our whole career throughout these years has been one succession of miracles. We are in Cape Coast—the place we have often longed for in our dreams. Before us is the wide ocean, the sound of whose tide seems day and night to echo in our ears the words of that sweet music which fills our hearts: "Free, free, and once again free."'

The history of Kumasi by no means ended with its capture by General Wolseley. On the contrary, the reign of blood continued for many years longer. The English army withdrew, after compelling the king to subscribe to a treaty, the terms of which were but poorly fulfilled. Karikari was deposed. Confusion ensued, and disorder swept the realm from end to end. Then a king named Prempeh secured the throne, and defied the British Government. Another expedition was organised against Kumasi, and Prempeh was banished to the Seychelles. The temple of the royal ancestors at Bantama was razed to the ground, and it seemed as if the authority of law and order were finally vindicated. It was, however, but a lull before the storm. In 1900 a serious rebellion broke out. The Governor of the Gold Coast and his wife, as well as our old friends the Ramseyers, and the other Basle missionaries, took refuge in the fort of Kumasi, and sent urgent messages for relief. Three months long they were compelled to defend the fort against the assaults of forty thousand Ashanti, and at length, the expected relief having failed to appear, to cut their way through the enveloping force and so reach Cape Coast. Before the end of 1900 Ashanti-land was conquered and formally annexed to the British Crown. The missionaries were welcomed back, and the interrupted missionary enterprise resumed.

### *The Situation To-day*

What is there to show to-day for past tears and past toil? I visited the neat and commodious church of the Basle Mission and attended an ordinary service of prayer and praise. I listened to the songs of Zion at a spot distant not a stone's throw from the place where, but a few years since, the groans of bleeding victims cleft the silent air. I heard the gospel of God's love proclaimed by a native who must have witnessed many a deed of cruelty and shame. At the close of the service I pressed the hand of the Christian elder Karikari, a grandson of that same Kofi Karikari who held the Ramseyers captive and imbrued his hands with human blood; and turning round I greeted Adu Bofo, a grandson of the general by whose orders the mission-station at Anum was plundered and burnt, and the missionaries harried through the country like driven animals. Not only the Basle Society, but the Wesleyan

Missionary Society, and more recently the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, have taken in hand the evangelisation of the Ashanti people. The results are such as to gladden the heart. 'There is not a mission-field in the world,' said the Wesleyan missionary to me, with pardonable enthusiasm, 'which promises richer rewards for the labour spent upon it.'

There is a bright future in store for the Ashanti people, if they would but turn from their idols and their fetishes to serve the living and true God. The Church is faced in these countries with a great task and a heavy responsibility. Upon the horizon looms an imminent danger, and that danger is Mohammedanism. There are thirty thousand Mohammedans among a population of not more than three hundred thousand Ashanti—a proportion of one in ten. Islam at present is passive, and is undertaking no active propaganda. But as soon as it commences to proselytise in earnest, there is a strong likelihood that the whole heathen population will adopt the religion of the Prophet of Mecca. As far as concerns the Christian Church at home, the present crisis in Ashanti-land is summed up in the single word OPPORTUNITY.

# CHAPTER II

## ALONG THE GOLD COAST

For that dear Name,
Through every form of danger, death and shame,
Onward he journeyed to a happier shore,
Where danger, death and shame assault no more.

LORD MACAULAY,
*Epitaph on Henry Martyn.*

### *The White Man's Grave*

To one who has visited other parts of the African continent, and has coasted past the rocky promontories of the Cape of Good Hope and Agulhas and the grass-covered hills of Kafraria and Natal, or has lain at anchor in Victoria Bay, with the dark mass of the Peak of Kamerun towering overhead, the shores of the Guinea Coast hold few attractions. The air is close and enervating. In the distance is visible the white line of surf, which breaks with never-ending roar upon the sands of this fever-stricken coast. Beyond surf and sand we descry the hazy outlines of a range of mountains, which at times make a close approach to the ocean, and anon recede to a distance of five-and-twenty or thirty miles. Between Cape Coast and Accra no signs of heavy forest are discoverable, while still farther to the east the shore is diversified by long stretches of mangrove-fringed lagoons, the home of the crocodile and the otter, and the breeding-place of those dread enemies of human life in West Africa, the *anopheles* and the *stegomyia* mosquito.

'The White Man's Grave' is the name by which, for two or three generations past, the Gold Coast has been stigmatised. When we consider the heavy toll of human life which the occupation and evangelisation of this region have exacted, we must admit that its evil reputation has been fully deserved. Without counting the loss of life in commercial and administrative circles, let us ask how it fared with the missionaries who first set foot on these shores. If we except North Africa, the western coast was almost the first portion of the continent to be touched by modern missionary effort. Christianity has

had its signal victories in West Africa, but they have not been bloodless. When we turn the page of history we learn at what great cost the Cross has been planted in these lands where human sacrifice and fetish worship prevailed. Read the story of the earliest enterprise of the Wesleyan Missionary Society: 'The first missionary was Joseph Dunwell, who landed on New Year's Day, 1835. In less than six months he was dead. The next labourers, Rev. and Mrs. Wrigley, arrived in September 1836. Within fourteen months both had died. In the course of 1837 Rev. Harrop and his wife landed at Cape Coast Castle. Neither of them survived a full month.' A tragic record indeed! Turn to the narrative of the early endeavours of the Basle missionaries: 'On the Gold Coast missionary operations commenced in 1828, under the encouragement of the Danes. Three of the first four missionaries died within the period of eight months. In ten years' time eight missionaries found an untimely grave, after but the briefest careers, in this deadly climate. At the end of the first decade no church had been established, nor indeed had a single convert been baptized.'

Another society that has done excellent work on the Guinea Coast is the North German (Bremen) Society, which in 1897 celebrated the jubilee of its work in West Africa. On that occasion the secretary made the following statement: 'Casting a retrospect over the labours of the past fifty years, we find that out of a total of one hundred and fifty-seven workers which the Society has sent out, fifty-six were driven home by ill-health, and sixty-four (without counting children) were laid beneath the sod of this land of death.' We cannot but do homage to the courage and the faith, the perseverance and the self-sacrifice, of these noble and fearless heralds of the Cross.

Let me tell you what my own eyes have seen. In the little burial-ground at Christiansborg, near Accra, I stood at the graves of six missionaries, who now rest beside one another, associated in death as they were associated in life. Over the graves I read the following six inscriptions:—

Levin Heller, died 18 February 1896.
Oscar Thal, died 20 February 1896.
Karl Leser, died 11 April 1896.
Richard Gruetzmacher, died 21 April 1896.
Philipp Lienhard, died 4 May 1896.
Herman Martin, died 22 May 1896.

Six workers cut down within three months of each other by that terrible disease, yellow fever! Once again, at the inland station of Ho, which is by supposition in a healthier situation than those stations which lie on the low and swampy coast, I visited the neatly-kept cemetery, and found there the tombstones which mark the last resting-places of twenty-five men and women who had fallen in the fight with the powers of darkness and disease. And when, a few days later, I stood in the churchyard at Keta, I counted more than forty graves in that shady burial-ground, of missionaries who had here breathed their last, within sight and sound of the mighty rollers of the great Atlantic.

### *The Wealth of the Gold Coast*

From Accra, the second West Coast port at which I touched, I made a little excursion in order to visit the inland stations of the Basle Mission. Starting from Christiansborg one morning at six, I was borne swiftly across the broad plain by a motor lorry belonging to the Mission Factory. The distance to the foot of the mountains is about twenty-eight miles. The plain itself is an open expanse, covered with grass and dotted with immense termite hills. At the end of six or eight miles a bushy undergrowth appears; presently trees begin to rear their heads, first timidly and then more boldly; and by the time we reach the foot-hills the vegetation has become quite dense and tropical. As we progress we light with greater frequency upon native villages, which the passage of the motor throws into a condition of wildest excitement—pigs squealing, curs yelping, poultry cackling, and jubilant children bursting with full-throated yells. In every direction we discern the signs of prosperity and affluence; and no wonder, for the market price of the humble cocoa bean runs from twenty shillings to twenty-five shillings per bag of sixty pounds avoirdupois.

The rapid development of the cocoa industry is a veritable romance of commercial enterprise. Its origin is as recent as the year 1890. A few years earlier, probably in 1885, a native brought with him from Kamerun a single cocoa bean. Five years later he picked his first pods, removed from them the precious seeds, dried the latter and conveyed them to the trader at the coast. What was the astonishment and excite-

ment of his fellow-villagers when he returned, with four golden sovereigns—untold wealth !—carefully tied up in the corner of his loin-cloth. A cocoa plantation suddenly became as great an object of desire as a gold-mine. But cocoa plantations do not spring up of themselves, and have to be planted. Cocoa pods were unprocurable. Cocoa beans rose in value until they fetched fabulous prices, as much as one pound—so 'tis said—having been paid for a single bean. Within a few months thousands upon thousands of cocoa trees were growing, tended, we may be sure, with the most scrupulous care. At the lapse of five or six years they began to yield their harvests. Money flowed into the country, at first in a steady stream, and then in an overwhelming flood. The cocoa industry assumed immense proportions. The natives were busy from morning to night in clearing forest and cultivating ever larger areas of ground. Feverish excitement and activity prevailed everywhere. For, the plantation once laid out, the care demanded by the trees was slight, the cocoa market remained firm, and the chance of acquiring wealth was certain.

At the present time thousands of acres of ground are covered with cocoa fields. The value of the cocoa exported, which in 1890 was only £4, amounted in 1915—only twenty-five years later—to the incredible sum of £3,560,000. And practically the whole of this amount goes into the pockets of the natives. For though European firms purchase and export the cocoa yield, it is the natives who grow it. By a wise provision the Government protects the native against a hasty and thoughtless alienation of the land which has come down to him through generations of prescriptive right. While transfers of ground as between natives and natives are free from restriction, transfers from natives to Europeans are subject to the careful inquiry and explicit sanction of the Concessions Court, which was called into being by the so-called ' Chamberlain Ordinance ' of 1900. In this manner the rights of the natives to their own soil are vindicated ; they are becoming daily more prosperous, more wealthy, and more independent ; and the Guinea Coast already counts more than one millionaire, at least according to native standard.

It may be surmised that this sudden access of wealth does not minister to the moral and spiritual welfare of the growing Church. Socially, it introduces a species of luxury, previ-

ously unknown, which reacts detrimentally upon the character of the native Christians. Morally, it fosters a spirit of self-importance, which is not readily amenable to the discipline of the Christian Church. Spiritually, it creates an atmosphere in which the distinctively Christian virtues pine, Christian zeal and devotion are quenched, and supineness and indifference prevail. The missionaries on the Gold Coast are fully alive to the dangers which threaten their flocks. The influx of Western wealth, indeed, is introducing, in every part of the continent, new social and economic problems, and is everywhere giving rise to anxious thought on the part of Christian leaders as to how best they can raise their people to such a level of spirituality, that they will be able to pass through these dangers unharmed.

### *From Station to Station*

The inland centres of the Basle Mission lie at no very great distance from each other, and I was able to visit the three stations of Aburi, Akropong, and Odumase in as many days. By the brethren on these posts I was treated with the greatest kindness and consideration. They provided me with bicycles and guides, and forwarded me from stage to stage in the most expeditious manner. At Akropong I was present at a communion festival, and though Lutheran celebration differs largely from what we are accustomed to in our Calvinistic Churches, I found myself perfectly at home. This was due in large measure to the hymns and hymn-tunes to which I listened and in which I could join. Many of the tunes which are in use in our South African Reformed Church are derived from German originals, and this is notably the case with our Passion hymns; so that when I heard the familiar 'O, gesegnetes Regieren' and 'Herr und Aeltster deiner Kreuzgemeine,' I was transported two thousand miles away to my distant southern home. After the delivery of the sermon, the elements were dispensed jointly by Rev. Jehle, the missionary, and an ordained native pastor. In groups of four or six the communicants would rise from their seats, and approach the communion-table—I am not sure that it is not called the altar—where the one celebrant bestowed the bread and the other proffered the cup. This continued for nearly forty minutes, until all the communicants, who numbered

between three hundred and fifty and four hundred, had partaken, the congregation in the meantime singing suitable hymns in a harmony which was both tuneful and uplifting. On the afternoon of the same day the annual Harvest Festival was held. Addresses were delivered by one of the missionaries, by myself and by a native presbyter, and then the members of the congregation filed past a table which had been placed before the pulpit, and laid their gifts upon it. Their offerings amounted to £23, 1s. 10d. and one fowl.

Leaving Odumase I crossed the Volta, a considerable river, which here attains a breadth of some two hundred yards. In company with a crowd of women and children I was ferried across in a long, narrow canoe, very much the worse for wear. There was six inches of water inside our frail craft, and considerably more than six feet of water outside, and for ten anxious minutes I sat balancing myself, hands on gunwale, and wondering whether I was going to escape with damp boots and soaking trousers, or whether I was destined to be precipitated bodily into the river, to make a mouthful for some prowling crocodile. The major catastrophe was happily averted, our solitary poler piloted us in safety to the eastern bank, I made good my escape from a precarious position, and considered my experience cheap at a penny, which is the sum which a paternal Government demands for this form of river transit. The Volta at this spot has low banks and unimpressive vegetation. The waters showed few signs of fish, but my guide, who rejoiced in the name of James Kofi, informed me that crocodiles were plentiful, though hippos had retired to the upper reaches of the river, to escape the rifles and harpoons of their human enemies.

Safely across the Volta, I reached Togoland, scene of the activities of the North German (or Bremen) Missionary Society, into whose methods of work I gained some little insight through visits to Peki, Ho, Palime, Lome and Keta. Though not as strong numerically as the Basle Mission, this Society is doing excellent work along the same lines and on the same principles as its older sister. Of both these agencies it is sufficient to say that they undertake and carry on their missionary operations with characteristic German thoroughness. Order and discipline are maintained. Habits of neatness and punctuality are inculcated. Obedience and deference

to authority are enforced. The solidity of the labours of our Teutonic friends is noticeable in the staff which they place at each station. In general, two married and ordained workers are appointed to each post. One has charge of the congregation, and the other of the school. Frequently there is a third, who may be the doctor, the builder, the book-keeper, or the normal teacher. Almost every station can also count on the co-operation of one or two ladies, who are either nurses or teachers. Great stress is laid on thoroughness in the educational work. There are out-schools, station schools, normal schools, Bible schools, and industrial schools. The various educational institutions of the Basle Mission are attended by between eight thousand and nine thousand children, and the Government of the Gold Coast, which is not slow in recognising the excellence of the results achieved, grants an annual subsidy of £400.

German thoroughness is also visible in the dwelling-houses which the Societies erect for their workers. In the Basle Mission they follow on all stations the same architectural plan, which has been largely copied by the North German Society. Picture to yourselves a large double-storied house, with schoolroom, carpenter's shop, and storerooms below, and dwelling house above. The walls are of burnt brick and are surmounted by a roof of galvanised iron. Round the whole building runs a balcony, to which each room has access by two glass doors, one on either side of the building, thus securing the maximum of air. The walls are thick and the edifice as a whole fronts the sun with an air of solidity, which may however be deceptive, since the invisible termites are everywhere busy with their work of destruction. One realises that the Mission is justified in sanctioning the expense which these elaborate buildings involve. The climate is so cruel towards the health of the missionaries that the most superior accommodation is necessary for those who expose themselves to it. The most expensive building proves, in the long run, to be the cheapest, since the death-rate decreases, and the workers generally enjoy improved health and greater vitality. So that in these regions also ' wisdom is justified of her children.'

### *Dangers and Problems*

The chief difficulties which confront the missionaries on the Gold Coast have been briefly referred to above, and stand

closely related to the evolutionary stage which the native tribes are passing through. The Ewe, the Tshi, and the Ga people, who inhabit these coasts, are rapidly acquiring great wealth. In comparison with their former simple life they have now reached the stage of pampered luxury. Avarice is eating at their heart. Drunkenness is on the increase, and bids fair to undermine the national health. It is nothing short of a scandal that the country is flooded with spirits, and that licensed bars have sprung up along the public highways like so many deadly mushrooms. There is an insatiable demand for the merest veneer of education. Western ideas of self-government are permeating the younger and more progressive minds. The influence and power of the white man, in certain circles at least, is viewed with suspicion, and there is a growing tendency to hold him responsible for all the ills under which the community is suffering. On the other hand, there is a powerful recrudescence of heathen beliefs and practices. Many of the secret societies, though banned by the Government, have revived their cruelties and abominations. Juju rites and fetish worship are still secretly observed, while in the seclusion of the bush, and under cover of darkness, human sacrifices are offered, and poison ordeals performed. The spread of civilisation provokes a reaction towards crudest barbarism, and while one section of the community advances to a higher ethical level, another reverts to type and relapses into the grossest superstition and savagery.

The progress of Western culture has given rise to another difficulty which presses heavily upon the missionaries. There is a lamentable paucity of native workers, the actual supply falling short of the clamant demand. 'Africa must be evangelised by the African' is an excellent principle, but it fails us when we cannot find the African who is ready to evangelise. 'Where are the young men who have attended our schools and imbibed our influence?' asks the missionary. Behind the counter, at the carpenter's bench and in the smithy, driving a pen as commercial clerk or as Government employee —anywhere but in the schoolroom and in the pulpit. As clerks and tradesmen they earn high wages, higher far than the pittance they would receive as teachers, evangelists, or native ministers. Comparatively few hear the call and feel the constraint to devote themselves to spiritual duties and to labour for the propagation of the eternal Kingdom. Never-

theless there are some, the faithful few, who with true self-denial, and despite strenuous efforts to tempt them away, have consecrated their talents to the humbler tasks of teaching and preaching, and who are reaping a rich reward in the confidence of their European colleagues and the affection of their native adherents. The serious and crippling lack of native workers, which is making itself felt in many parts of Africa other than the Gold Coast, can only be effectually remedied in the manner which Christ indicated when He said, 'Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will *thrust forth* labourers into His harvest-field.'

# CHAPTER III

## KAMERUN AND ITS HINTERLAND

Many a thrill
Of kinship I confess to with the powers
Called Nature: animate, inanimate,
In parts or in the whole, there 's something there
Manlike, that somehow meets the man in me.

BROWNING.

### *En voyage to Kamerun*

THE year 1913 was nearing its close when I took ship at Lome, the capital of what was then German Togoland, for German Kamerun. A word of historical introduction, as preparation for our visit to Kamerun, may not be amiss. The continent of Africa, as far as its political conditions are concerned, is likely to be more profoundly modified than any other, outside the European states immediately involved, by the issue of the present world-conflict. It were the height of unwisdom to venture upon any prophecy as to the uncertain future. Let us therefore seek compensation by glancing at a page of the incontestable past. It was during the eighties of last century that the scramble for Africa took place, which resulted in the partition of every still unattached portion of the continent among a few European powers. The Germans, in their quest for territory, lighted upon the Cameroons, which, though first exploited by British traders and occupied by a British Missionary Society, had been left unannexed by the British Government. Dr. Gustav Nachtigal, the famous explorer of the Sahara, landed at the mouth of the Wuri River, and concluded a treaty with the chief Mbeli, better known as 'King Bell.' Five days later the British consul arrived with a mission to annex the Cameroons to the British Crown. He was too late, for the Cameroons had already become 'Kamerun' and a protectorate of the German Empire.

Since that date the Germans have shown that they were in earnest in attempting to develop the country and to

exploit its wealth. A regular service of steamers was established, trade and intercourse were encouraged, the interior was connected with the coast by a series of excellent roads, and three short lines of railway were built. The Pax Germanica was gradually extended over the whole protectorate, and one of the officials assured me that I could travel with security in every part of the country, excepting only a small area in the extreme north-east. This I found to be the truth, and even the Lakka people in the north-east, against entering whose territory I was expressly warned, proved on closer acquaintance to be not so very terrible after all, and quite as much afraid of me and my carriers as I had any need to be of them and their henchmen. In South Kamerun, at any rate, I travelled through a comparatively unknown tract, and spent four days upon lonely forest paths and four nights in remote native villages, with no better defence than a walking-stick in my hand and two native carriers at my heels. I do not mean to imply that the sense of security which possessed me was wholly due to confidence in the authority which the Government wielded; rather, I travelled unperturbed because of the knowledge that, at distances of fifty to a hundred miles, mission stations were dotted over the face of the country, and missionary influence had penetrated even to comparatively distant tribes.

On the voyage between Togoland and Kamerun I experienced two of those many disappointments to which the African traveller must make up his mind in advance. The first was this—the steamship agents at Accra, to whom I had entrusted the duty of placing my luggage on board of the steamer which I myself was to join at the next port, had signally failed to perform their share of the contract. On stepping aboard at Lome my first act was to hunt up the purser and claim my baggage. But the most careful search failed to reveal the smallest vestige of my belongings. Here was a disaster—a man proposing to traverse the continent, and without sufficient equipment to carry him to the next village. I had nothing but what I stood in. The difference between a Conservative, a Liberal, and a Radical has been defined as follows: the Conservative changes his shirt once a day, the Liberal once a week, and the Radical whenever he gets the chance; so it is apparent that I was reduced to the very lowest radix of Radicalism. However, things are

never as dark as they seem. The barber on board, who also presided over a little stock-in-trade of toilet and other articles, was able to meet my most urgent needs. When I set foot on shore I found the missionaries exceedingly sympathetic. One offered me a shirt, another supplied a pair of boots, a third provided me with a stretcher; and in the end I found that I had suffered little beyond the natural anxiety as to the recovery of my missing goods.

The second disappointment which fell to my lot occurred at Victoria, the first port of Kamerun at which our vessel called. The medical officer of health came on board, and informed us that as we had been so unwise or unlucky as to drop anchor outside Lagos roads, a port at which yellow fever had raged, was raging, or was about to rage, we must consider ourselves under strict quarantine for a period of six days from the time of notification. General consternation! But there was nothing to be done—no defence to raise, no extenuation to plead, no higher authority to appeal to, and no daily paper to write to. So I decided to possess my soul in patience, an exercise which I found frequent occasion to repeat in the course of the next two years. Tucking a copy of Harris's *Dawn in Darkest Africa* under my arm, I withdrew, more in sorrow than in anger, to a quiet corner, where I could hide myself as in a pavilion from the strife of tongues; and thus pleasantly and profitably immersed in the pages of that illuminating work, passed from the old year into the new. On the 4th January 1914, being Sunday, the embargo was removed, and we found ourselves at an early hour stepping ashore on the wharf at Dualla, in time to attend the Sabbath service in the little church at Bonaku (formerly Hickory).

### *Missions on the Coast*

During the two days of my stay at Dualla I was able once again to observe the excellent labours of the Basle brethren, since their four stations, situated on both banks of the Wuri River, are in close proximity to one another. This close occupation—or *intensive Bearbeitung*, as they would call it—has been made necessary to meet the powerful competition of the Roman Catholic Church. Since approximately the year 1890 the Catholics have been settled both in Kamerun and in Togoland. In the former colony they have a smaller

MISSIONARIES AT VICTORIA (KAMERUN)

A FOREST PATHWAY

number of schools and pupils than the Basle Mission, but in Togoland there is a slight preponderance in their favour as against the North German Mission. In all the German colonies in Africa the Catholics displayed, up to the outbreak of the war, a tireless activity in breaking new ground and establishing new stations. Speaking of the continent of Africa generally, we need to acquaint Protestants with the fact that the work of the Roman Catholics is on a much larger scale than that of their own missions. Statistics are notoriously elusive, and, unlike wine, they do not improve with age; and the following (for which I am indebted to the C.M.S. Report for 1912-13) are offered not as infallibly correct figures, but as a basis of comparison. In connection with the various Protestant Missions in Africa there are at work approximately 2450 men and 2040 women, while their total adherents are estimated at about 2,000,000. Roman Catholic priests number 2305, monks 1182, nuns 3280, and catechists 652. The total number of converts is placed at 1,100,000, and of catechumens at nearly 600,000.

At Dualla I found myself once again upon historic ground. The pioneer of missions to this portion of the West African coast was Alfred Saker, a man whose name is not known nor his memory revered as they should be. The church in which the Christian community at Dualla still worships to-day is Saker's erection. A mural stone inside the building contains the following inscription :—

> 'This tablet is erected to the memory of the Rev. Alfred Saker, who, in the service of the Baptist Missionary Society, was the first to plant on this spot the Gospel of Christ, and to introduce among the Dualla people the knowledge of the Word of God and of the arts of civilisation. He founded the colony of Victoria, on Amboises Bay, as a refuge to the persecuted people of Fernando Po. Among many perils, sustained by faith in God and by ardent love to the Lord Jesus Christ, he laboured for 36 years, with unflagging zeal, to instruct the ignorant, to elevate the degraded, and to save the souls of the perishing.
>
> 'He was born on the 21st July 1814, and died March 13th, 1880, cherishing to the last moment of his life the hope that the Dark Continent of Africa should in due time be filled with the light of Divine truth and love.'

Another mural tablet commemorates the memory of

'five infant daughters and an only son, Alfred Ernest Fernando, of Alfred and Helen Saker.' In the grounds of the mission house are two tombstones, bearing respectively the following inscriptions: 'E. U. 1869' and 'M. A. Grenfell, 1877.' The former indicates the last resting-place of Emily, the wife of Dr. Edward Bean Underhill, one of the pioneers of the Baptist Mission on this coast, and the latter is the tomb of the first wife of Grenfell of the Congo. The story of Christian Missions in West Africa, and the heavy price which has been paid in human lives for the redemption of Africa, may be gathered in part from a study of epitaphs and memorial tablets.

### *Through the Primeval Forest*

After procuring all possible information as to the route to be followed, I left Dualla on the 6th January, with the determination to make my way to the field of the American Presbyterian Mission in South Kamerun. Opinions were divided as to the best means of reaching my objective. On one point only my informants were agreed, that I should take train in the direction of Edea, and consult with the missionary there as to my further itinerary. To Edea therefore I determined to go. Behold me then, on a certain Tuesday morning, taking my seat in a second-class coach on the Mittelbahn, with chop-box (*anglicé*, luncheon-basket) in the rack and camp-bed under the seat. The whistle sounds, hats are raised with graceful, wavy motion, in the polite German fashion, mutual farewells hurtle through the hot air, the train moves slowly forward, and we plunge into the heart of the tropical forest. Again my attention was riveted on the luxuriance of vegetation which unfolded itself before our gaze as we rushed past. Palms everywhere, and of every possible species—cocos palms, oil palms, king palms, betel palms, raphia palms, borassus palms, fan palms. Their variety was endless. And then there were the tall, stiff *bombaces*, or silk-cotton trees, with circles of branches at regular intervals from the bottom of the trunk to the top. Multitudes of other trees, which I failed to recognise, thrust their heads aloft, a long, slender trunk being surmounted by a tuft of feathery foliage. And covering every bush and tree was a profusion of lianas, convolvuli, and climbing plants of every description, all emphasising Nature's motto 'Sursum,'

and exemplifying Nature's ceaseless striving to reach air and light and sunshine.

There was another kind of forest through which I had to force a way on my quest of the American field. It is, on a small scale, the forest of Stanley's experiences, which so laid hold upon his imagination that he entitled the volume describing those experiences *In Darkest Africa*. That there is a Darkest Africa I too am able to attest. Imagine yourself marching through a wood so densely packed with trees that you can descry above your head no glint of sunshine and no patch of blue. The road—such as it is—is littered with decaying leaves and rotting branches. Mighty tree-trunks, all covered with slime and moisture, lie athwart your path, and necessitate a difficult and sometimes dangerous scramble across. Treacherous, slippery roots, concealed under a deposit of moss and leaves, lie in wait for you and trip you up. Presently you reach a long stretch of soft, marshy ground, where you sink to the ankles in black mud and green slime. Miasmatic odours assail your nostrils, and you imagine yourself to be drinking in, with every breath you draw, the germs of deadliest disease. A profound silence, broken only by your own timid footsteps, pervades the whole scene. Not a bird twitters, not an owl hoots, not an insect chirps in these dark and dismal glades. No sign of life is anywhere visible. The busy ants, which in brighter surroundings flow across your path in a ceaseless stream, are here conspicuous by their absence. The gnats, sand-flies, and stinging insects generally, which elsewhere make your life a burden, leave you in peace when you enter these aisles of silence and of gloom. You are obsessed by an undefined sense of mystery and dread. You feel yourself to be in immediate contact, not with Death, but with the Shadow of Death. You had rather see the face of the Arch-Enemy himself, and be confronted by a visible and tangible foe, than have the vague menace of the Shadow of Death encompassing you—before you, behind you, above you—chilling you to the marrow, and filling you with an indescribable horror that struggles for expression but can find none.

To return to the railway journey, we reached Edea about noon, and I was met and welcomed by the local Basle missionary, Mr. Flogaus, who, after conducting me to his home,

immediately set about making arrangements for my further journey. The situation of the mission house, upon the left bank of the Sanaga River, is one of the most enchanting which I have anywhere seen. Together with the church and the school-building, it occupies a considerable elevation, which projects peninsula-wise into the broad bosom of the river. A few yards higher up the stream, a small tributary empties its volume of water into the main river. Somewhat lower down, the Sanaga, here at least five hundred yards in breadth, is spanned by the railway bridge; and where the line of metal strikes the near bank a deep cutting has been excavated, which completes the isolation of the mission area, giving it the shape of a huge irregular triangle. Finally, the railway authorities have indemnified the missionary for trenching on his grounds by throwing a bridge across the aforesaid cutting; so that Mr. Flogaus, like some feudal knight, occupies a stronghold that is defended on two sides by swift streams, and on the third by a moat and drawbridge. From the windows of his home he enjoys unrivalled views. To the left, the long, spidery bridge; before, the smooth expanse of the great river; to the right, at a distance of less than half a mile, the beautiful falls of the Sanaga, famed throughout West Africa; and all around, the interminable forest—dark, motionless, mysterious and minatory. I was entranced, and could hardly speak or eat. The preparations for my further march aroused but the mildest interest, and even if Mr. Flogaus had said categorically that it was impossible to forward me on my way, I suppose I would have felt hardly any regret.

The advice given me at Edea was that I should try to reach the American brethren from this point. Mr. Flogaus had been over a part of the route, but he offered me as guide his servant Martin, who, he assured me, knew the way perfectly. This may have been true, but an intimate acquaintance with *soi-disant* guides, derived from many journeyings in all parts of Africa, has convinced me that a perfect knowledge of the way means no more than the ability, by frequent interrogation and cross-examination, to obtain a general sense of direction from the passer-by. I have no doubt that Martin knew the road. In fact, when I asked for more detailed information he told me that the distance between Edea and Lolodorf, the nearest of the American stations,

could be covered in four days. But when I pressed him to mention the stages, he discovered that he would require five days. This was unsatisfactory, and I therefore requested him to revise his itinerary and devise a quicker route. Puckering his brows he flung himself into strenuous calculations, and then announced that the journey could not be accomplished in less than a week. This was worse than ever, so I hastily interrupted his explanations and told him that I would accept his first tender. And so we clinched the bargain. It is but fair to say that the compact on both sides was faithfully kept. Martin, for the one part, performed his scouting duties satisfactorily, and though to judge by the map we made the most terrible detours, I do not suppose that I could have found a shorter route myself. And I, for the other part, marched my twenty miles per day uncomplainingly, and accepted with philosophical fortitude such accommodation for the night as it pleased Martin and Fate to throw into my lap.

### *On the March southward*

Mr. Flogaus was by no means a hustler, but he strongly recommended me, in view of Martin's varying estimates of the probable length of the journey, to make an immediate start. And, in spite of the counter-attraction of the fascinating Falls, this advice jumped with my own desire. Without delay, accordingly, we set out—Martin, as guide, interpreter, and major-domo, in front, bearing bed and stretcher; in the middle, the *dominie* (as he is styled in South Africa), garbed in khaki, booted in yellow leather, crowned with a broad-brimmed Scout's hat and armed with a stout walking-stick; and behind, my second retainer, balancing upon his head the indispensable chop-box. His name was Dimalla, which Mr. Flogaus kindly interpreted for me as equivalent to 'Let us march.' This I found a happy omen, for most of the carriers with whom I have had to do in times past might have been more appropriately named 'Let us sit down.' I am glad to state that I found Dimalla as progressive as his name implied, and the journey thus auspiciously commenced was carried to as successful a conclusion.

The main incidents of the tour can be summed up in a dozen sentences. First of all, I spent four nights in native

huts. This is not a practice to be recommended. The natives are generally kind enough to vacate their habitation for the white man, but the other denizens of the hut are less accommodating. Many of these are well known to Europeans, and their nocturnal attacks, though calculated to disturb the sleeper's rest, need not be looked upon as fraught with positive danger. But there is another insect, a tick, bearing the ominous name of *ornithodoros moubata*, that stands in quite a different category. Its bite inoculates the victim with the germ of that dangerous tropical disease known as Relapsing-fever or Tick-fever. A single bite of the *ornithodoros* can bring about a violent attack. Even the hardened natives fear this tick, and when unable any longer to defend themselves against its assaults, will burn their huts to the ground and build others. It is therefore extremely unwise for the traveller to seek refuge in native houses. But necessity knows no law; and I was reduced, on this tour and on many subsequent journeys, to the choice between the hut, the ticks and possible fever, and the open, the rain and certain rheumatism.

A second experience. 'Man needs but little here below.' My provisions, though unexceptionable in quality, were strictly limited in quantity. The chop-box, on being opened, was found to contain not very much—not much, that is, according to the standard set for the African traveller. Two small loaves, a tin of sugar, a couple of spoonfuls of tea, and a pot of jam. That was all. I found no kettle, no gridiron, no saucepan, no knife, fork, or spoon, no biscuit, no sardines, and no tinned meat. I see my friends shaking their heads remonstratively. Yes, good friends, I own the soft impeachment. That was insufficient provision for an eighty-miles' walk. But recollect, I was a stranger in a strange land; my own baggage had gone astray, through no fault of my own; upon the kindness and hospitality of local friends, unknown before, I dared not too much impose; and finally—what I had proved to be amply sufficient. From the natives I purchased eggs and bananas, and thus I eked out the slender store which I had in hand. At evening Martin boiled me some water in any utensil which he could beg, borrow, or steal. Sometimes this was an ancient saucepan, mostly a discarded tin, and always it lacked a cover. In this, with a banana-leaf laid over it, the water was brought to the boil, and huge

quantities of weak tea prepared. The tea tasted strongly of smoke—that was unavoidable with such a primitive kettle —but it was gulped down in cupfuls all the same; for the traveller who has marched for eight hours in the sweltering heat which prevails at three degrees of north latitude, is plagued with an unquenchable thirst. If any tea was left over, it was carefully bottled for use along the way on the morrow. On two or three occasions I ventured to taste a little palm wine. I trust that this lapse from the strict tenets of teetotalism will be forgiven me. I am afraid that if I had committed this offence at thirteen degrees of south latitude instead of three degrees north, I would have been subjected to ecclesiastical discipline. In our Nyasa Church the making and drinking of beer and wine expose to congregational censure. My plea in defence is, again, necessity. Of prepared tea I had no more; to drink water in the unboiled condition is dangerous; to endure thirst is hard. Accordingly, when a native chief approached me with a cupful of palm wine, put it to his own lips first (in approved African fashion), and then offered it to me, I waived principle and drained the cup. The taste was that of ginger-beer, with a touch of bitters thrown in.

### *Dangerous Animals*

One evening, when we had arrived, at a somewhat early hour in the afternoon, at a village whose name is immaterial, Martin discouraged the idea of proceeding any further by saying, 'We no catch dem next town; plenty elephant live for bush before.' This statement seemed to me to be very doubtful, both from the point of view of English grammar and of African fact. I acquiesced, however, in his implied suggestion, and spent the night in a hut which I shared with four negroes, one of whom—poor fellow!—coughed all night, while the other three contributed an obligato of deep, sonorous snoring. The next day Martin's facts were brilliantly justified, though his grammar remained hopelessly indefensible. As we marched along we came constantly upon fresh tracks of elephants, of which there must be an immense number in these inaccessible forests. Here they had evidently crossed our road and tunnelled a passage through the dense undergrowth; a little further it is plain that they

took the line of least resistance, and followed our path for several hundred yards; yonder again crushed branches and uprooted trees showed unmistakably that the huge animals had sought a lair in which they could snatch a brief repose. Not only elephants but also buffaloes frequent these woods. Pointing to some droppings by the wayside I asked Martin what animal left those. 'Bush-cow,' was his answer. 'Ah!' I replied, more to myself than to him, 'buffalo, *nyati*.' 'Yes,' said Martin quickly, catching at my words, '*nyati, nyati*.' The buffalo is known in Kamerun by the same name by which it is called in Nyasaland, three thousand miles away.

Was I afraid to find myself in such close proximity to the haunts of elephant and buffalo, armed as I was with no more deadly weapon than a penknife? Not in the least. These mighty denizens of the forest, though one lights upon their tracks almost daily, are themselves seldom visible. During two years' wanderings I caught sight of elephant twice and of buffalo only once. The danger which the average person is inclined most to dread, attacks from wild beasts and infuriated animals, is as a matter of fact almost negligible. The men who are mauled by lions and trampled underfoot by elephants are not the travellers who keep to the highway, but the incautious hunters and too-enthusiastic sportsmen, who seek their quarry in the dense forest and pursue wounded animals into the tangled jungle. The elephant may slay its dozens, the lion its scores, and the venomous snake its hundreds, but these are not the real enemy of the African. The foes which he must chiefly dread are to be found in the ranks of such tiny and insignificant creatures as the *jigger*, which has destroyed the feet of thousands and tens of thousands of natives in all parts of the continent; the *anopheles* mosquito, by which the malarial parasite is conveyed into the human system; the *stegomyia* mosquito, the host of the parasite of yellow fever; the tsetse-fly, which introduces into the human blood the parasite of that dread disease *trypanosomiasis*, or sleep-sickness; and various species of worms and other insects, which are responsible for diseases known to us under the awe-inspiring names of *dracunculosis*, *ankylostomiasis*, *myiasis*, *filariasis*, and *elephantiasis*.

Have you been attacked by all these dreadful ailments? asks the reader. I can gratefully answer, No. Nor indeed need any traveller who exercises due caution. Mosquito-

bites, with their invariable concomitant, malarial fever, are indeed almost inevitable; and few Europeans who penetrate into the heart of the continent can avoid picking up a jigger or two. But the other diseases catalogued above are found chiefly in natives, who are undefended by mosquito-nets and unacquainted with the rules of hygiene, who drink any and every kind of water, so long as it is still liquid, and who, when seized with sudden indisposition, are destitute of the necessary knowledge to deal with it and the necessary remedies to relieve it.

Nevertheless, as was meet, I made early acquaintance with some of the numerous plagues of Africa. The first was the jigger plague. I was just congratulating myself that I had so long escaped the attention of this species of (wholly invisible) flea, when one fine morning I awoke with a violent itching in the right foot. I examined the spot in a good light. There was the characteristic pustule, with a tiny black spot in the centre. It represented the female flea, which worms its way under the skin and there deposits its eggs. Next morning I summoned a sharp-eyed boy, placed a clean needle in his hand, and indicated the seat of irritation. In a few moments he had painlessly removed the egg-cell, which was the size of a large pin's head. I rubbed in a little carbolic oil, and the operation was over. That was my first jigger, but by no means my last.

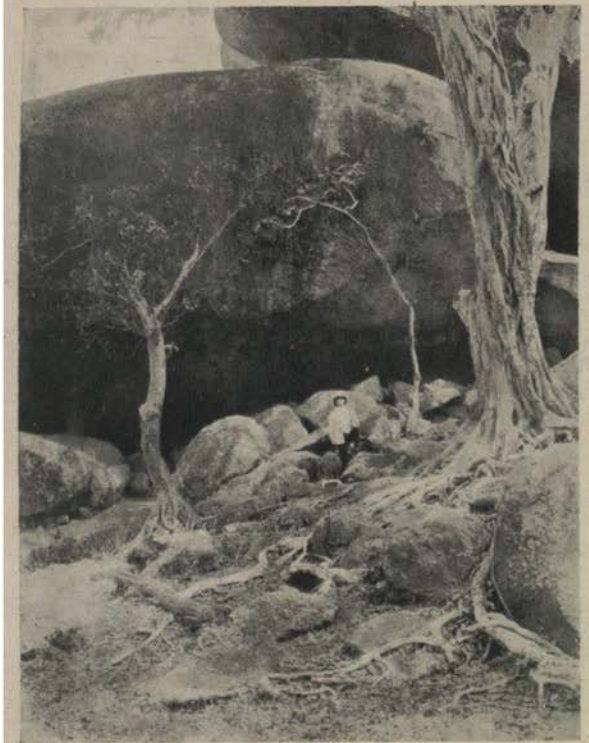
Another plague which I ran up against on the way to Lolodorf, and upon hundreds of occasions subsequently, was the sweat-flies. They are much smaller than the ordinary house-fly, but inconceivably more troublesome. For you cannot drive them away, so persistent and so shameless are they. When out in the forest, trying to procure a breakfast for myself, I have found it impossible to take aim because the sweat-flies would not be denied. They settled on your neck, they assailed your eyes, they crept into your nostrils. Armed with a twig you could generally keep them at bay, but directly you laid it down in order to grasp your rifle, the cloud of flies closed in upon you, and while you were vainly attempting to cope with them, your breakfast, to your chagrin, made good its escape. The bite of the sweat-fly creates a red spot on the skin, which soon becomes a pustule and continues to itch for several days. I have been so mercilessly bitten by these little pests that my body was in a perpetual itch, both

by day and by night, for a whole week. Nothing seemed to relieve the intolerable irritation, and indeed on the journey between Edea and Lolodorf I had nothing to apply. Head and neck, hands, wrists and ankles, were covered with the bites of this pestilential insect. I have contracted a wholesome abhorrence of the sweat-fly.

Another acquaintanceship which I would rather have avoided was that with the vicious driver ant. On a day I was striding dully along, my thoughts hovering detachedly, like Mohammed's coffin, between heaven and earth—a condition of mechanical physical motion and suspended mental activity which those who are accustomed to strenuous and solitary marching will readily recognise. The busy ants beneath my feet were such a constant phenomenon that I gave them not the slightest attention. Nor did I even observe that my two carriers, who were walking in front, had suddenly quickened their speed and were covering a distance of ten or twenty yards at a sprinter's pace. And so, abstractedly, I entered the danger zone. In a moment the voracious animals were swarming all over me and driving their terrible mandibles into my tender flesh. Oh, horrors! I rushed forward frantically. 'Help, Martin! Help, Dimalla!' I loosened my boots and tore off my clothes, while the two boys, casting down their loads, responded nobly to my appeal. Luckily I sighted a stream of water, and into this I dashed, clad only in my shirt. Immersed beneath the water, the fierce creatures were forced to forgo their hold upon me. In about fifteen minutes all my assailants had been cleared away, and I was able to resume my garments and continue my march. But after that experience I never again fell into a fit of absent-mindedness so great, that I did not instantly divine the presence of driver ants, and take proper precautions to avoid their attack.

*'In forest, by slow stream and pebbly spring'*

The country through which we passed is heavily forested—so much I have already made clear. In these trackless woods, whence the traveller finds it difficult, if not impossible, to trace the sun's course across the sky, all sense of direction is lost, and this, to one like myself, born and bred upon the



THE ROCK OF ABEOKUTA

A STREAM IN THE CONGO FORESTS

vast, open karroo of South Africa, is no small deprivation. I like an untrammelled view across broad plains, with a distant mountain or kopje for objective. I can then employ my abundant leisure in estimating the number of miles to be traversed, only to discover alas! when the shadows of night begin to fall, how far achievement lags behind aspiration. But when I enter the dark and impassive forest, I lose not merely my sense of direction, but my sense of self-determination, my sense of freedom, my sense of joy and blitheness. The forest is immense, but it is the immensity which numbs and appals. I love the immensity of the boundless prairie, I love the immensity of the illimitable ocean, I love, but with a feeling in which awe predominates, the immensity of the unfathomable midnight sky. These are immensities which make for heart-enlargement. They gladden the eye, they stimulate the imagination, they kindle the emotions. But the immensity of the forest oppresses me, overwhelms me, and encloses me in a dead world that is peopled only by the pallid ghosts of antediluvian monsters.

During the last day of the journey we had to traverse a range of mountains. Through an occasional clearing I once or twice caught sight of the blue hills, and congratulated myself that from their summit I should enjoy glorious views of peak and valley, forest and stream. I was speedily disillusioned. The mountain itself was as steep and as lofty as the most ardent mountaineer could desire, but alas! visible summit it had none. From foot to crown it was covered with forest vegetation, so densely interlaced that the sky was only rarely apparent. The tremendous exertions which I was undergoing apprised me of the fact that I was ascending a mountain, but other indications were absent. I shall not easily forget that climb. Across or under huge tree-trunks lying prone athwart the narrow path; through rivers and mountain freshets; into rocky valleys and slimy bogs. The declivities at times were such that I had the greatest difficulty in keeping my legs. My carriers stumbled along as best they could. Dimalla, with a chop-box now almost empty, banged it with studious regularity against every available tree. Martin succumbed to the violent strain, and I had to procure another boy to relieve him of his load. For five hours we sweated and stumbled and fretted and grumbled, until at length the obstacle was vanquished

and we stood, panting but triumphant, on the other side, and within easy reach of Lolodorf.

The land through which we passed is well watered. I have already referred to the Sanaga, one of the most considerable of the rivers of West Africa. On our journey towards the south we arrived also on the banks of the Nlong. I descried a canoe moored to the shore, and as I was contemplating the craft with unappreciative eye, a native appeared, whose speech, to a careful listener, betrayed a faint family resemblance to the German language, He inquired whether I wished to cross. 'Of course,' said I, 'but not in this canoe, which is leaky, and possesses, as you see, two magnificent holes—port-holes, I presume—one fore and one aft, and each of them just one and a quarter inches above the water-line.' But Charon was supremely indifferent. 'Es gibt kein ander,' quoth he, in a take-it-or-leave-it tone of voice, and proceeded to bale. My carriers laid their loads in the rickety vessel, and stepped gingerly on board; and not to be outdone by them in rashness I followed suit. We reached the other side in safety, but I never was nearer providing a meal for hungry crocks, for had but a gallon of water entered our boat we must have been inevitably swamped.

On several occasions we negotiated roaring streams—forty, fifty, and sixty feet broad—by means of the felled trunks of giant trees. When the distance chanced to be great, we found that some kindly hand had fixed a strong liana from bank to bank, so that holding on to this we could maintain our balance on the slippery bridge. In most cases, however, the liana was wanting, and I found it no easy matter, with my hard and unyielding boots, to preserve my equilibrium. A ducking I did not greatly fear, except for the unpleasantness of moist and clinging garments, for in the days of my youth I learnt, somehow and somewhen, to swim; but for the sake of my watch I dreaded immersion. To lose, through an accident like that, the use of my time-keeper was a calamity too dreadful to contemplate. Why, your watch tells you when to rise in the dark morning, determines your rate of travel, fixes the distance you have accomplished, warns you of the arrival of the dinner-hour, and sends you punctually to bed at night. I can conceive of the African traveller doing without his hatchet, his lantern, his water-bottle, his rifle, his tent, but never without his watch.

And therefore I displayed the greatest solicitude about the health of my timepiece. And I am happy to say that it met with no accident, succumbed to no internal complaint, survived all the vicissitudes of travel, and lies ticking before me on the table as I write. It is a Waltham which I purchased in London for some fifty shillings or so, and few of my purchases have afforded me greater satisfaction.

# CHAPTER IV

## TEN DAYS IN SOUTH KAMERUN

With aching hands and bleeding feet
We dig and heap, lay stone on stone;
We bear the burden and the heat
Of the long day, and wish 'twere done.
Not till the hours of light return
All we have built do we discern.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

### *The Station of the Pygmies*

ON reaching Lolodorf, on Saturday the 10th January, I approached one of the buildings and knocked. A young lady appeared upon the verandah and addressed me in English; and heartily glad I was to see a white face again. Presently I made the acquaintance of Mr. Good, who stands at the head of this station. Here I must observe that the missionaries everywhere extended to me the most hearty welcome and the most hospitable entertainment. None of the American friends had heard my name previously, much less seen my face. I arrived among them a perfect stranger, and I left them a friend and fellow-labourer, who carried away their sincerest good wishes.

When the traveller reaches his destination—heated, weary, dust-stained, thirsty—the thoughtful host or hostess brings forward first of all a cup of tea or a glass of lemon-juice. Then inquiry is made as to the newcomer's name, nationality, and place of residence. It was here that I encountered trouble. My patronymic was generally a poser. A small excursus was necessary, illustrated by a rapid review of South African history, to demonstrate *first*, that my name is of French origin; *second*, that I have not used the French language as medium of ordinary conversation for a period of two hundred years; *third*, that by lapse of time, intermarriage, and linguistical change, I have become a South African Boer, in the ordinary connotation of the term *Boer*,

and own the Dutch language as my mother-tongue and the official language of the Church to which I belong. My demonstration thus brought to a triumphant Q.E.D., a halt is called by my considerate host and refreshments handed round, in order to strengthen speaker and audience for the consideration of the next point, which is the object and purpose of the former's visit. Starting from the dictum of Terence, suitably amended, 'Africanus sum, nihil Africani a me alienum puto,' I explain that as I am African born, everything African is of the highest interest to me; and that in pursuance of this idea I am visiting the vast continent of Africa, with special attention to its mission-fields. And so forth. The second chapter of my voluminous explanations is brought to a close by the announcement that the hot water is ready and the bath waiting. Of all the hospitable attentions bestowed upon the passing traveller, there is not one that is more highly appreciated than the preparation of a steaming bath. In the bathroom I generally found, not merely towels and soap, but a supply of clean linen, most welcome to a man who is journeying afoot and has lost all his baggage. When I emerge from the bathroom I can hold up my head again, for I have been metamorphosed into a civilised being, who can move without blushing in the most select circles.

The official name of this mission station is Maclean Memorial Station. It was established under the following circumstances. When Henry M. Stanley emerged from Darkest Africa in 1877, after crossing it from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic, he announced to a wondering world the presence of pygmy peoples in the recesses of the Congo forests. This statement was corroborated by other travellers and missionaries, amongst others by Dr. Adolphus Good, father of the young friend whose guest I was at Lolodorf. Widespread interest was aroused, not only in the scientific world but also in missionary circles, and various mission friends came forward with suggestions to evangelise these dwarf-tribes, and with promises of support in case such special efforts should be undertaken. A wealthy Scotch lady, Mrs. Maclean, made an offer of sufficient money to start a station among the pygmies, and this offer was gladly accepted by the American Presbyterians at work in South Kamerun. Dr. Good had reported the presence of a tribe of pygmies

in the dense woods of Yaundeland—the very forests through which I had been forcing my way. On the edge of that territory, accordingly, the new station was established. But the hope to reach the pygmies has not been realised. They proved to be a timid people, difficult of access even in their proper habitat, and not to be persuaded into residing, for ever so brief a period, at a white man's settlement. Similar experiences visited the efforts of the Church Missionary Society to reclaim the dwarfs of the great Congo forest that lies to the west of Lake Albert and the Semliki River. From time to time a few individuals would make their appearance at a Government post or mission station, and remain long enough to pick up a sentence or two of the local language, and then the lure of the forest proved too powerful, and they disappeared as mysteriously as they came.

### *Viewing the Work*

I remained over a Sunday at Lolodorf and was much impressed with the many-sided character of the work of our American brethren. With immense exertion and at no small cost a considerable superficies has been cleared, a station regularly laid out and gardens planted. The residences which the missionaries have put up remind us that our good friends here hail from a land in which the tradition of the backwoods is not yet lost. The houses are built of saplings from the forest, with walls and roof of bark. To my eyes they appeared very flimsy constructions, but I was assured that they weathered the most furious gales and were perfectly watertight when the rains descended. The church building was of the same light and airy architecture, but brickmaking, with an eye to a more permanent structure, was in full progress. The purpose of the mission, as explained to me by Mr. Good, is to make the natives self-reliant in character and self-supporting in social activity. The various departments of technical work, such as bricklaying, carpentry, and building, stand under very little white supervision; and indeed, with the smallness of the staff and the great variety of missionary undertakings, very little white supervision is possible. The boys' school counts some five hundred pupils, but the girls' school only totals about one-fifth of that number. In many African tribes there is a strong disinclination on the part of the

parents to entrust their girls to the care of the missionary. It may be a species of dread surviving since slave-raiding days, when comely girls formed the chief booty; or it may be the suspicion, not wholly unfounded, that daughters who have been under missionary influence are less willing to be regarded as purchasable commodities, and are therefore less amenable to parental authority. Whatever the reason, the fact cannot be gainsaid that girls are frequently in a very distinct minority in mission schools. This is a matter upon which suffragettes may well bestow their attention.

From Lolodorf I was anxious to visit Elat, a station lying farther inland, and through the kindly aid of my new-found friends I was able to carry out this project with the smallest expenditure of time and effort. A bicycle was placed at my disposal, and I was told that I would have no difficulty in covering the fifty miles to Elat in a day. This I found to be correct. The German roads are excellent, and bicycles and motors can fly over them at top speed. The natives whose villages lie on or near the highway are held responsible for keeping it free from sticks and stones and debris generally; with the result that the grateful traveller has a stretch of smooth and even pathway reaching from Kribi at the coast right away to beyond Elat. Leaving Lolodorf at dawn, I rode into Elat (the Government post bears the name of Ebolowa) at half after three, and was welcomed by the Rev. Melvin Fraser, one of the oldest and most experienced missionaries of this field. Under his genial guidance I was able to view the station, which made upon me the impression of being a veritable hive of busy activities. I looked in at the schools, which, unfortunately for me, were all closed, it being vacation time. I inspected the immense church building, 138 feet long by 74 feet broad, built in a similar fashion to the church at Lolodorf, and accommodating an audience of 4500. I attended a class at the theological seminary, where Mr. Fraser has twenty students in training for the ministry. I visited the extensive and well-organised industrial department, with its steam-saw, its cabinet-making, its tailoring, and its shoe-making sections. Elat, with the wonderful numbers that gather at its great church festivals, has attained to fame in recent missionary annals. At the communion feast held in October 1912, a census of the congregation was

taken, which gave a total attendance of 8120 individuals. Many of these had come long distances, bringing with them a sufficiency of food for an absence of a week, or even a fortnight, from their homes. To accommodate this huge influx of visitors, guest-houses have been put up, and in these the women and children find shelter, the men being expected to shift for themselves. And Elat is no solitary instance, for similar extraordinary attendances are witnessed at Lolodorf, Efulen, Metet, Fulasi, and other stations and out-stations of the mission.

### *The Bulu Tribe*

The Bulu people, among whom the American Presbyterians have established themselves, are a branch of the great Fan tribe that is extensively spread throughout South Kamerun and French Gaboon. Not having had the privilege of making their acquaintance in their unregenerate days, I cannot say what they were like before the advent of the missionary. The Fans were notable cannibals, and so, no doubt, were the Bulu. Says Miss Mary Kingsley: 'The cannibalism of the Fans, though a prevalent habit, is no danger, I think, to white people, except as regards the bother it gives one in preventing one's black companions from getting eaten. The Fan is not a cannibal from sacrificial motives, like the negro. He does it in his common-sense way. Man's flesh, he says, is good to eat, very good, and he wishes you would try it. Oh dear no, he never eats it himself, but the next-door town does. He is always very much abused for eating his relations, but he does not really do this. He will eat his next-door neighbour's relations, and sell his own deceased to his next-door neighbour in return; but he does not buy slaves and fatten them up for his table, as some of the Middle Congo tribes I know of do. He has no slaves, no prisoners of war, no cemeteries; so you must draw your own conclusions.'

The Bulu, as I knew them, were a distinctly friendly and sociable folk. Without being forward they are by no means shy. They came readily at my beck to bring me water and fruit, or to give me necessary directions as to my route. Their wardrobes are but scantily furnished forth. The men wear a loin-cloth, and the women (except in the vicinity of mission stations) are content with an insignificant bit of three-cornered cloth before and a bunch of palm-leaves

behind. Children are adorned at birth with a string round the waist, and this is looked upon as a powerful charm and is never removed. When in mourning, the women still further reduce their covering to a mere tuft of grass, with the inevitable palm bustle. Though the Bulu wear very little in the way of clothes, they are by no mean averse to ornaments. As a general rule for Africa we may say that, except in the most primitive communities, the scantier the clothing, the richer the adornment. So it is with this people. A woman who regards a banana-leaf as sufficient for decency will load her legs with coils of brass rings, cover her arms with bangles, cast about her neck string upon string of blue and white beads, and pierce the septum of her nose to receive a metal ring or a bit of glass rod. The Bulu, I am glad to report, are a cleanly people, and at every river and stream which I passed I saw men, women and children performing their ablutions. Bathing to them is a very simple proposition. Towels and soap they have none. Bathing-sheds are a superfluity. They simply lay down their load at the wayside and plunge into the water. When the body temperature has come down about half a degree, and the topmost layer of dirt and sweat has been washed off, they emerge from their bath, shoulder their load, and move gaily on.

### *Work on the Coast*

On my return journey from Elat I spent a day at Lolodorf, and then, having procured another bicycle from a progressive native, I set out for Batanga, on the sea-coast. The distance was seventy-five miles, but the road being unexceptionable, the weather propitious and the machine trustworthy, I arrived in good time, with an hour and a half of daylight to spare. The situation of this coast station is in every way charming. The house, in which I was hospitably entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Adams, stands upon an elevated promontory and is guarded by tossing palm-trees. Thirty yards away from my chamber the surf of the wide Atlantic beats unwearyingly upon a shell-strewn beach. Its gentle roar, mingling with the rustle of the palm-leaves, sounded soft and mellow in my ears, and lulled me to quiet and unbroken rest. I was irresistibly carried away to my own distant home in the shadow of Table Mountain. I enjoyed the same uninter-

rupted view across the illimitable ocean; I listened to the same restless moan; I felt upon my cheek the kiss of the same breeze; I saw in the offing the same white-winged fishing-boats. So near and yet so far!

Batanga derives its importance from its situation on the coast. It is the doorway through which incoming and outgoing missionaries must pass. But as a centre of mission work it is not to be mentioned in the same breath with Elat and Efulen. The competition of the Roman Catholics is particularly strong along the coast, and therefore it does not surprise us to find our energetic Presbyterian friends working from five centres within the space of about as many miles. There is Bongaheli, at the southern extremity of this field, with commodious church, cosy missionary residence, schoolrooms and gardens. Then comes the central station at Ikihiki, consisting of three fine residences embowered in a grove of palms. A mile and a quarter to the north of Ikihiki lies the out-station Lobi. The same distance separates the latter place from the church and school of Bwambi. And finally we have Kribi, the seaport and trading centre, where the Mission possesses a church and a manse.

### *Methods and Results*

A glance back at the history of the Presbyterian Church in Kamerun gives abundant cause for gratitude. Ten or twelve years ago the position of the Mission, which is now bearing such rich fruit, was in the view of the Home Board extremely unsatisfactory. A minute was accordingly passed, in which the Board declared that 'for the next ten years the field be regarded as on trial; that a careful policy be marked out . . . and consistently carried through; and that . . . in case at the expiration of ten years it would seem wise to withdraw from the present field, it would be possible at once to take up work elsewhere.' During the probationary decade the Mission has amply justified its existence. The missionaries are all agreed that one of the chief human factors to which the rapid development of the past few years is to be ascribed is the attention and time devoted to regular itineration. Even those missionaries whose sphere of work lies nominally

in the station school or the industrial institution spend their vacations in touring the country. From village to village they pass, preaching the Gospel in the out-school, in the palaver-house, by the wayside—anywhere, everywhere. Young ladies, who have been engaged during the school term in arduous educational labours will, when the vacation comes round, cheerfully mount their bicycles, and accompanied only by one or two personal boys, to carry bed, basket and baggage, devote ten days or a fortnight to itinerating among the remoter towns and villages. The result has been to give to the missionaries an insight into the actual lives of the natives such as mere residence on a mission station could not afford; to proclaim the 'good news' to the many who have hardly heard it, and to explain it more fully to the few who are seeking clearer knowledge; and *en passant* to remove from the native mind every trace of doubt as to the disinterestedness of the missionaries' motives and the sincerity of their love and devotion.

Looked at in greater detail, the methods which have been so successful in South Kamerun can be reduced to four, which were originally laid down by the Home Board as follows:—

1. The missionaries shall as far as possible avoid becoming pastors or regular ministers of native congregations; but Christians and members of the baptism class shall be organised into groups under native teachers and assistants, while the missionary shall carefully supervise a number of groups.

2. The itinerating work shall be carefully organised by the marking out districts which are to be worked, and by assigning to missionaries and native workers a regular itinerary, which shall be systematically followed; also by the application of such other methods as the missionaries in council may determine upon.

3. Considering that a large educational scheme is indispensable in following out this policy, special attention shall be devoted to the development of suitable boarding and day schools, and of industrial work.

4. In order to build up a self-sustaining and self-governing native church, native converts shall be encouraged and expected to give according to their ability for the support of their pastor, evangelists, teachers and congregations, and every Christian shall be taught that it is his duty and his

privilege to do all he can in order to carry the Gospel to his fellow-men.

These principles have yielded brilliant results in the mission-field of South Kamerun, and they are worthy of consideration by missionaries and mission-boards working in other parts of Africa. But it would not be just to ascribe the notable successes which the Mission has achieved to the application of sound principles alone. Principles are purely theoretical, and if not backed up by united and vigorous action, the best principles are almost as futile as the worst. This united and vigorous action has not been wanting in South Kamerun. The missionaries have given themselves to the work with singular devotion of purpose and unanimity of aim. 'They never spare themselves,' said to me one who is himself not an American, but who has closely observed their work; 'they toil on unhasting and unresting, till when furlough is due at the end of three years, there is seldom one of them who is not completely broken down. And with it all they are so modest that no one would guess with how much devotion and self-sacrifice they are animated.' This was high praise indeed, but it is praise which I believe to be fully deserved.

# CHAPTER V

## TRAVELS IN THE TWO NIGERIAS

One God the Arabian prophet preached to man;
    One God the Orient still
Adores through many a realm of mighty span—
    A God of power and will.

A power that at His pleasure doth create
    To save or to destroy,
And to eternal pain predestinate
    As to eternal joy.

LORD HOUGHTON.

### *The Peak of Kamerun*

AT Kribi I again went on board one of the comfortable boats of the Woermann Line, bound north-westward for Southern Nigeria. It was a matter of deep regret that I could not visit the Calabar Missions, among which I would mention, as of special interest and importance, the Mission of the United Free Church of Scotland, the Qua Iboe Mission, and the Primitive Methodist Mission. Owing to the lack of suitable steamship connections, I returned from Kamerun to Lagos direct. The distance from Kribi is less than six hundred and fifty miles, but we spent a week over it. At every port we reached our vessel lay at anchor for two or three days, discharging limitless quantities of railway material into the insatiable maw of lighters which, like the daughters of the horse-leech, cried incessantly, Give, give. The seashore at Kribi is uninteresting, and the broad estuary of the Wuri has even fewer attractions to offer to the weary and discontented voyager, but the Bay of Victoria is a pure delight. It is a small, but deep and safe harbour, and is supposed to represent the crater of an ancient volcano. The shore rises abruptly in a series of little hills, which from slope to summit are clad with heavy forest. Before us, as we face the town of Victoria, these hills ascend in terrace after terrace until in the distance they form a mighty range. Immediately to our left towers

the Peak of Kamerun, of which all the mountains which we have been viewing form the majestic pedestal. From any point of vantage this sublime Peak presents a magnificent spectacle. Stretching away above the clouds to a height of 13,400 feet, it is the loftiest mountain of West Africa, and the only one in the whole continent which lies upon the immediate seashore. The principal summit is occupied by a group of craters, from which, as recently as 1909, issued immense streams of lava. We took a brief run ashore, visiting the home of the Basle missionary, which is planted in one of the most delightful spots along this shore. We admired the impressive avenue of king-palms, and passed as in a dream through that place of enchantment known as the Government Park.

> And there were gardens bright with sinuous rills,
> Where blossomed many an incense-bearing tree;
> And here were forests ancient as the hills,
> Enfolding sunny spots of greenery.

### *Lagos and its Lagoons*

Lagos, the principal seaport of Nigeria, and the terminus of the Kano railway, when viewed from the deck of an ocean steamer, is feeble and unconvincing in the extreme. The coastline shows in the distance as utterly stale, flat and unprofitable. It consists largely of lagoons, and on an island in the midst of one of these lies Lagos, at an elevation of eighteen inches above sea-level. A close approach to this shore by any of the large ocean steamers is impossible. Passengers and goods are transhipped into small vessels, not much larger than good-sized tugs, and in these they negotiate the shifting sandbanks which guard the entrance to Lagos lagoon. The port of Forcados, in the Niger delta, offers far greater facilities for the handling of cargo, and Port Harcourt, lying still farther to the east, is destined to become, so soon as the projected railway to Abinsi is completed, the one port of entry and exit for the whole of the Benue basin.

Lagos has passed through a stirring history which cannot be recounted here. It was the last resort of the slave-traders who carried on their nefarious traffic in the Gulf of Benin. It was the scene of the last slave-market held on the Guinea Coast; and during my visit Mr. Griffin, the Superintendent of the Wesleyan Mission, took me to see the

Faji Church, which is built upon the site formerly occupied by the slave exchange. In 1861 the slave-trade was finally put down, the slave-market destroyed, and Lagos opened to the trader and the settler. Immigration flowed in a steady stream and the town now counts upwards of 70,000 inhabitants, the half of whom are Mohammedans. The Europeans form a small but progressive community of four hundred. The air, as was to be expected, is hot and sultry; the atmosphere is enervating; cooling breezes are rare and fickle; by day and by night one never experiences the comfort of feeling properly dry. These are solid disadvantages which all the charms of Lagos, charm they never so wisely, cannot conjure away. And so I made haste to shake the dust of Lagos from my feet, and wipe its sweat from my brow, and to hie me to the healthier interior.

### *Round about Abeokuta*

The morning on which I took my seat for Abeokuta in the Lagos-Kano train was typical. The air was hot, still and lifeless; the road to the station was naturally dusty but artificially moist; the crowd of perspiring natives were mildly excited, but in a restrained, fatalistic way, as if it really mattered not at all whether they were whirled away to fresh woods and pastures new, or were left standing on the platform, staring helplessly at the departing train. A few hours' run carried us to our destination. The name Abeokuta is not merely denotative but descriptive. It means 'under the rock,' and yonder we see the rock, environed and partly covered with trees, under which the town lies. The surrounding country is palm-clad. I saw very little virgin forest, which I suppose has been cleared away by the enterprise and industry of the agricultural Yorubas. The hot air, the dry heat (so unlike the moist oppressiveness of Lagos), the tall elephant grass, the mimosa and prickly pears rooted in a rocky soil, and the ungainly, leafless baobabs reminded me of South Central African conditions.

During my stay here I was hospitably entertained by Bishop and Mrs. Tugwell at the C.M.S. house. A very successful 'mission' was being conducted at the time of my visit by Mr. and Mrs. Trevelyan Snow, and Bishop Tugwell was so fully occupied that I had few opportunities for discussing

missionary problems with him. This was my loss, for the Bishop has spent more than half a century in Nigeria, and no one has a more intimate acquaintance with its diverse problems, or has addressed himself more devotedly to their solution. In addition to the C.M.S., the Wesleyan Missionary Society and the Southern Baptist Convention of the United States of America are carrying on mission work in Abeokuta. There is room for all, for this town—if town it must be called, and not city—runs to a population of 150,000. Christianity is making progress in Abeokuta. The Anglicans have erected a Grammar School at a cost of £4000. The Blaize Industrial Institute, an interdenominational institution donated by a native gentleman who had acquired considerable wealth, aims at imparting a thorough training in handicrafts to aspiring young men. Congregations have been established in various parts of the town, and the Europeans are assisted in their pastoral work by a number of ordained native ministers.

The local Wesleyan missionary, the Rev. T. Christmas Anwyl, was kind enough to act as cicerone and to introduce me to the sights of Abeokuta. I am bound to say that he acquitted himself of his task with great fidelity, and we had quite a strenuous time in the sweltering heat. We first took a look round the market—as attractive to the African, quite apart from the question of utility, as Regent Street to the Londoner. The trading instinct among the Yorubas seems to be most fully developed in the women, for it is they, with their babies on their backs and their grandmothers in tow, who crowd the mart. It is astonishing to see what is offered for sale. If a girl has no more than four dry beans she piles them up, three below and one above, sits down cross-legged behind them, and waits for a customer, Nothing is too insignificant or too worthless to be exposed for sale. Let me mention some of the objects which I saw. Bits of quartz, such as a road-mender would use, if crushed a little smaller, for paving purposes; horns of goats, which the butcher has cast on the dunghill; the beaks of fowls and other birds which have suffered the death of Lady Jane Grey; the dried-up claws of a couple of monkeys; the hands of a gorilla, looking so human that I drew off in horror, suspecting my neighbours of cannibalistic practices. This weird collection was spread out in quite an artistic fashion, much as a dealer in

A CORNER OF THE MARKET, ABEOKUTA

'JUJU PALAVER, ABEOKUTA MARKET

antiques would show-window his goods. I was at a loss to think who would buy this lot, unless some mad naturalist were to drop unexpectedly from the train. But when I inquired as to its purpose and use, I was politely informed that the repulsive stock-in-trade was 'all juju palaver'; in other words amulets, charms, medicines, mysterious potions, and the accessories of witchcraft generally, to be stirred into the pot on a dark and stormy night, after the manner of the witches in *Macbeth*:

> Fillet of a fenny snake
> In the cauldron boil and bake;
> Eye of newt and toe of frog,
> Wool of bat and tongue of dog,
> Adder's fork and blind-worm's sting,
> Lizard's leg and owlet's wing,
> For a charm of powerful trouble,
> Like a hell-broth boil and bubble.

So much for juju. There were other indications of surviving, or it may be recrudescent, heathenism. As I passed along the main street, I saw a dozen or so of maidens engaging in a ceremonial dance in honour of some nameless heathen divinity. I also viewed the procession called *egungun*, in which men are dressed up and disguised in such a manner as to be wholly invisible and unrecognisable. From beneath the multitudinous wrappings proceed unnatural and mysterious voices, purporting to be those of the spirits of long-departed ancestors, and demanding food and drink to solace them in the abodes of the dead. The procession appears at dusk, headed by a youthful acolyte of six or eight years old, and a band of drummers who rend the air with their tuneless tom-tom-ing.

Abeokuta is the capital of the Egba country, a little state which has secured for itself autonomy under the British Crown. The supreme authority is vested in the Alake or king, who with his Council directs the affairs of the nation. The state owns its Courts of Law, its Civil Service, its Customs, its annual Budget, and is fast amassing a national debt. What further proof is needed that it is developing along the most approved lines of Western civilisation? The Council makes a small annual grant for education, but its somewhat slender credit was being laid under contribution, at the time of my visit,

chiefly for the carrying out of a Waterworks Scheme and an Electric Lighting Scheme. I was greatly interested in this experiment at self-government on the part of a native state; but it has been, apparently, no very great success, for I have since heard that the Egba people have surrendered their quasi-independence, and have been merged politically into the Protectorate of the two Nigerias.

The natives of these parts are industrious agriculturists, and enjoy a large measure of prosperity. Men and women dress very decently in flowing cotton garments, Grecian style. Not so the piccaninnies. Boys and girls up to seven years mostly wear nothing: the girls sometimes a string of blue pearls round the waist, or a row of what looked to me like black beetles, though as a matter of fact I was too shy to institute a closer scrutiny. The deference paid to age and seniority is very marked. Upon the street and in the market-place it is a common sight to see young women fall gracefully on one knee as a salute to father or father-in-law, to uncle or to chief.

### *The Missionary Opportunity*

The briefest review of the present position of missions in Southern Nigeria must suffice. Freed slaves from Sierra Leone, who had been converted to Christianity, were the first to evangelise the Yoruba people. It was at their earnest request that the Church Missionary Society, about the middle of last century, commenced mission work in these regions. A work which thus owes its inception to native Christians has quite appropriately made large use of native agents for its extension. In 1864 Samuel Crowther, the rescued slave, was created Bishop of the Niger Territories—the first native African to be consecrated to this high office. To-day the Church in Nigeria is presided over by a European, Bishop Tugwell, who is supported by two assistant bishops of African blood—Oluwole and Johnson. The extent to which the C.M.S. work in West Africa is dependent upon a native agency is further indicated by the fact that, as against twenty-three English, there are sixty-three ordained African clergymen.

After the lapse of nearly seventy years it may be imagined that Christianity has struck its roots deep into Nigerian soil. Heathenism, as we have seen, still exists, but it is decadent. Heathen beliefs and superstitions cannot long maintain

themselves against the spread of education and the advance of civilisation. Where heathen practices still hold their ground they are afraid to show their face, and are only carried on under cover of the strictest secrecy. And education is undoubtedly spreading. From every part of the territory comes the increasingly urgent demand for more schools and more teachers. 'In the Ijo country alone,' writes a missionary, 'we have more towns asking for teachers than we have teachers in the whole of the Niger mission.'

The Wesleyan Missionary Society has the same tale to tell. 'Urgent appeals to begin work in new places come to us with an almost bewildering frequency.' 'The hinterland of Dahomey has at last been opened to us. Barriers which have hitherto proved impassable have been broken down in a way which compels us to think that there is a call from God to enter.' 'North, east and west new countries lie waiting, no longer hostile or indifferent, but appealing with tragic earnestness for immediate help.' Extracts like the above from the W.M.S. report help us to realise the immense need of West Africa, and the unparalleled opportunity which it presents to the Christian Church of to-day. Nor does the report just mentioned say a word too much when it observes: 'When we remember the fearful hindrance the climate has been, the short terms of service, and the consequent lack of continuity and of experienced workers, it is clear that West Africa is the most fruitful harvest-field in the world.'

### *Face to Face with Mohammedanism*

We cannot, however, delay too long in Southern Nigeria: let us cross the Niger into the Northern territory. The two provinces have, it is true, been lately united and placed under the administration of a Governor-General, but as fields of missionary activity they may best be considered separately. The first important centre which I visited was Zaria, which with the surrounding country forms a Mohammedan sultanate, under control of the local *emir*. It has a long history that reaches back to the beginning of Hausa rule in the Sudan. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries it was probably the dominating state in the Western Sudan, but it was subject to many fluctuations of fortune, and during the nineteenth century was tributary to the emir of Sokoto. In the town

of Zaria we can even to-day observe many indications of its former greatness. A river flows through the midst of the city, carrying life and fertility. Round the whole place are the remains of a great wall, which cannot be less than six or seven miles in length, and must at one time have been a mighty bulwark, though it has now been allowed to fall into irretrievable ruin. Within this wall are to be found, not merely the homes of the inhabitants, but hillocks of iron-stone, commonages, extensive gardens and broad open squares. I was reminded of the ancient cities of the east—of Nineveh, that great city, wherein were more than sixscore thousand people, and also much cattle; of Babylon, with its terraces and hanging gardens; and of Damascus, through which flows the beautiful Abana, and whose orchards and meadows are famed throughout the Syrian world. But Zaria, unlike those ancient Eastern towns, is wholly devoid of architectural pretensions. Everything is built of sun-dried mud—the city wall, the residences, the mosques, and even the emir's palace.

From the point of view of Christian missions the change of scene from Southern to Northern Nigeria, from towns like Abeokuta and Ibadan to a town like Zaria, is immense. We breathe another atmosphere. In Abeokuta or Ibadan the Mohammedan question, it is true, is ever with us, as a difficult problem to be solved, but in Zaria the Mohammedan question is a serious menace that must be courageously faced. In Ibadan the Moslems are conciliatory: Mrs. Fry, of the C.M.S., told me that she frequently addressed them in the open air, and met always with a courteous hearing. In Zaria, and still more in Kano, the Moslems are inaccessible, if not positively hostile and fanatical. And in their antagonistic attitude towards Christian emissaries the Moslems are, most unfortunately, encouraged by the British Government. Bishop Tugwell, in 1900, led a party of missionaries to Kano, but the Government would not permit them to remain there. Dr. Miller subsequently established himself in Zaria; but though frequent efforts have been made to acquire a site for permanent work at Kano, the Government has been obdurate. It is urged by the authorities that the Mohammedan emirs acquiesced in the annexation of their sultanates by the British Crown on the express condition that there should be no interference with their religion, and it is held that to

permit Christian missionaries to settle in centres that are clearly Mohammedan would be a breach of faith. The missionaries, on the other hand, maintain that the Government, in attempting to vindicate this principle, is betrayed into a line of policy that is distinctly unjust towards Christianity. In the Government school at Zaria, for example, instruction in the Koran finds a place in the curriculum, while instruction in the Bible is prohibited. Moreover, missionaries of the Cross are barred from entering Kano, while missionaries of the Crescent—the Moslem imâms and malams and traders —can travel whither they will and make what propaganda they may, without let or hindrance. Such discrimination is clear injustice. The Christian missionary to Mohammedans prefers no request for favouritism, he asks for no official assistance in his evangelistic work, still less does he even hint at the forcible repression of Mohammedanism; but what he does ask and what he has a right to expect is impartiality and strict neutrality. This is in accordance with that liberty of conscience and freedom of belief which is our common heritage. Further than this we need not go. There are other and far more powerful motives which impel us to evangelise Moslem nations and communities, but they are not such as appeal to the powers that exercise temporal authority. But the demand for even-handed justice towards men of all creeds is one which the State cannot refuse without serious detriment to its own influence and authority.

### *On the Bauchi Plateau*

Since crossing the Niger at Jebba, we have been steadily ascending. Zaria lies at an altitude of over two thousand feet above sea-level and enjoys a bracing climate. Pretty well due east from Zaria lies the Bauchi plateau, which rises to four thousand feet. On this lofty tableland the Sudan United Mission and the Cambridge University Mission, the latter working in connection with the C.M.S., have planted mission stations. I was not able to reach the Cambridge Mission, but I paid a brief visit to the pioneer work of the S.U.M. at Du. The tribe that is being evangelised from this centre is known as the Burum. It consists of about 80,000 persons who are entirely pagan, and form an emphatic contrast to their Moslem neighbours. The Mohammedans

have a culture of their own, and Kano, Sokoto, Katsena and other Mohammedan centres are huge emporiums of trade. The pagans care very little about trade, and confine themselves to pastoral and agricultural pursuits. The Mohammedans dwell in great walled cities. The pagans build their little *kraals* in inaccessible granite *kopjes*. The Mohammedans are clothed from head to foot in turban, flowing robes, and ornamented sandals. The pagans discard every vestige of cloth, and garb themselves in leaves. It would seem as if these primitive tribes of the plains and the *kopjes* desired to emphasise the difference between themselves and their more powerful and influential neighbours. No doubt some memories survive of the time when the Mohammedans looked upon the defenceless pagans as lawful prey, when they raided their villages, harried their lands and enslaved their womenfolk. Such memories die hard, and even to-day there is little love lost between Mohammedan and pagan. And herein, at the present juncture, lies the opportunity for Christian missions among this simple people.

The Burum tribe is still in the Adamite stage of development. Of clothing they have practically none. The men occasionally don a piece of softened skin, but the women carry no more covering than a bunch of leaves plucked from the nearest bush. Their taste for ornament is more highly developed than their desire for covering. Anthropologists are quite right when they tell us that with primitive man the impulse to deck himself from a sense of vanity precedes the impulse to cover himself from a sense of shame. These Du natives are not too poor to purchase cloth, nor too unskilful to manufacture garments of skin. They simply feel under no necessity to clothe themselves. But of ornaments they have a great variety. I took note of a girl who displayed about her person the following: the ears were perforated to contain two pieces of reed, each eight inches long; in the septum of the nose was inserted a large metal ring; from the lower lip depended a bit of tin, resembling a wire nail six inches long; and round the neck she wore a string of beads. Furthermore, she was adorned with the inevitable bunch of leaves, which became visible when she turned round. No doubt she was looked upon as the beauty of the village.

The Sudan United Mission has been at work both here and at Bukuru, for some six years, but the response up to the

present has not been very eager. Meanwhile the missionaries are trying to master the language and to win the confidence of the people among whom they dwell. At any rate, Christian missions have been planted among these tribes, so that their absorption by advancing Mohammedanism is not a matter of course, and ought now to be an unlikelihood. The first converts, in a tribe newly evangelised, are always the most difficult to gain. But when the first are won and begin in their turn to instruct their fellow-tribesmen, the rate of progress is much accelerated. Above all, the difficulties which missionaries encounter at the start are divinely intended to be a challenge to their faith and obedience, and to develop in them the spirit and practice of intercessory prayer.

### *The Delays of a River Voyage*

From Du I returned, *via* the tin mines of Narraguta (on which I cannot enlarge) and Zaria, to Baro, on the Niger, with the intention of reaching Lokoja, where a portion of my equipment lay awaiting my arrival. The river journey is accomplished by steam-tug. The distance is not more than seventy miles, and since we are travelling downstream ought not to require more than ten or twelve hours. We sheered off from the bank at Baro on a Friday afternoon at half-past three, and our captain, who had a limited vocabulary of West-coast English at command, gave me the assurance that we should arrive at our destination early on Saturday afternoon. Now mark how wide a gulf yawns between promise and fulfilment in Africa. On the first afternoon all went well. We anchored for the night at half-past six; since no captain is foolhardy enough to attempt night travelling through the shifting channels of African rivers. When darkness fell I procured a lantern and tried most unwisely to do a little reading and writing. In a few moments I was enveloped in clouds of flies, gnats, moths, and mosquitoes. So I hastily spread my rugs—the reader will please remember that I was a deck passenger only—suspended my mosquito net, and beneath it sought refuge and repose. Instead of the arms of Morpheus I found the stings of anopheles. The mosquitoes had discovered a hole in my armour, and assailed me all night long in merciless fashion. Next morning my forehead was swollen and my eyes bunged up in a manner to

cause grave suspicion in the minds of all men to whom my moderation was not known.

At dawn on Saturday we hove our anchor and set out. The banks of the famous old Niger are not particularly attractive just here, so I immerse myself in literature, heavy and light. At 8.45 I am conscious of a slight shock, followed by a violent tremor, and I discover that we are aground. Ah, well, that is of frequent occurrence, and I shall learn at any rate what means our worthy and swarthy captain adopts to free himself. My education in this hitherto neglected branch of knowledge was soon complete. Directly the nose of the tug buries itself in the invisible sand the telegraph points to 'full steam astern.' The muddy water is lashed to fury, but the tug, with its satellite lighters, remains immovable. Then the skipper tries to jump the obstruction and signals 'full steam ahead.' Result, as aforesaid. Then two of our four lighters, which happily are still floating free, are detached, and allowed to drift fifty yards downstream, where they come to anchor. A steel cable is attached to them, and the donkey-engine is brought into play. After half an hour's hauling we find that the tug has moved somewhat less than half an inch. This rate of progress is deemed unsatisfactory, so the captain must adopt other measures. With infinite trouble a large anchor is lowered from the bow, conveyed by boat to a distance of forty yards and dropped overboard; a cable is attached and the donkey-engine fumes and frets in fruitless efforts. Not the least movement is apparent; or wait, there is movement, for surely the cable is shortening over the windlass. Alas! it is not the boat that is moving but the anchor that is dragging. At the lapse of an hour we have succeeded in hauling the anchor forty yards and heaving it on board again. A five minutes' interval for reflection is now allowed. The anchor then is lowered again, carried out the regulation distance and dropped in another spot. More haulage work follows. History repeats itself, and at the end of another hour we are still 'as you were.' Well, let us attempt to free the two barges that still lie aground. The donkey-engine grinds out more music—*sforzando* and *ad libitum*. Presently there is the faintest movement, followed by the wildest excitement on the part of our dusky and perspiring crew; and at length, at two o'clock, the two remaining barges float downstream to join their companions. The

rest of the afternoon is absorbed by the recalcitrant tug. Cables are attached, they break under the violent strain to which they are subjected, they are re-attached, creak and groan, grow tense and fall slack, during the whole livelong afternoon, until finally, as the sun dips beneath the wood on the western horizon, we emerge into liberty. It is night. Fortunately we can fall upon no more sandbanks on Saturday the 14th February 1914. Our detention has lasted only a brief ten hours.

I wish I could report that things were better on Sunday the 15th, but candour compels me to confess that they rather grew worse. Our captain was a black man, indeed, but he controlled himself marvellously well: I heard no strong language from his lips; I could distinguish no signs of irritation in his demeanour; his calmness and imperturbability were positively unnatural. As for me, when I saw the precious hours slip useless away, while I lay baking in the sun, I felt a strong gush of sympathy with the bishop who, when the waiter poured the hot soup down his neck, ejaculated, 'Will any layman present kindly give expression to my feelings!' When the third evening of my ten hours' journey drew in, my patience was exhausted, my food was exhausted, my interest in the vagaries of our little craft was exhausted, and I had small stomach for another night on deck. So I told the captain, in a tone which I intended to be bitingly ironical, that I wanted to get to Lokoja that same night. The African is impervious to irony, and the skipper, to my astonishment and delight, pointed to a village that I could just descry in the gloaming, and said, 'I give you boatee for them village and the king of them village he give you canoe for Lokoja.' This was something practical, and I instantly closed with the offer.

Leaving the bulk of my luggage to the tender mercies of the friendly captain, I embarked in the boat and was paddled swiftly to the quiet town, which was already half wrapped in slumber. Our arrival created no small commotion. A visit from a white man, and at such a time of night!—no event of equal interest had ever occurred in the short and simple annals of Apanja. After a long palaver, complicated by the confusion of tongues, a man appeared who seemed clad with the necessary authority to procure me a canoe and two paddlers. My two boatmen I had never seen, never

saw (for the night was as dark as pitch), and never will see or at least recognise again. Nevertheless I confided myself to their care without the slightest hesitation, and we drove swiftly into the black night. Conversation was impossible, for I could utter not a word of their speech, nor did they understand a syllable of mine. The distance to Lokoja was about twelve miles. My two men paddled with great vigour and without a moment's rest. After we had journeyed on for about ninety minutes I saw lights gleaming in the distance, and surmised correctly that they denoted the position of Lokoja. But it took us yet another hour to arrive at our destination. The profoundest silence prevailed. Lokoja was evidently fast asleep. I climbed the steep bank, got my parcels ashore, and made my paddlers happy with half-a-crown apiece—a bit of terrible extravagance! Moving gingerly along the river bank, I found a night-watchman enjoying an illegitimate snooze. Him I roused and compelled to guide me to the missionary's house. We arrived, however, at the wrong verandah, and I was unfortunate enough to awaken the wrong man. A gruff, sleepy voice from behind a mosquito-net said something unintelligible to my guide. I muttered apologies, we retraced our footsteps, and in a couple of minutes' time I discovered the Church Mission house, and by a stroke of undeserved luck, the missionary himself, with one foot in bed. He set before me meat and drink, especially drink. I arose with hunger stilled and thirst quenched. I was conducted to a prophet's chamber, where, postponing all explanations of my whence and my whither, I flung myself upon the couch and straightway fell into a dreamless slumber. For that midnight reception I shall long continue to bless the name of Alvarez.

So ended my misfortunate journey. Next morning I scanned the river for signs of the dilatory steamer, but in vain. Finally, at 2.30 on Monday afternoon, the 16th February, the long-overdue *Egori* was moored to the bank at Lokoja, and I retrieved the balance of my baggage. She had spent seventy-two hours over the seventy miles that lie between Baro and Lokoja. Who said *ox-waggons*?

THE NIGER AT LOKOJA

LANDING-PLACE OF THE BOATS, LOKOJA

# CHAPTER VI

## THROUGH THE COUNTRY OF THE MUNCHI

Rugged type of primal man,
Grim utilitarian,
Loving woods for hunt and prowl,
Lake and hill for fish and fowl,—
As the brown bear, blind and dull
To the grand and beautiful.

Yet who knows in winter tramp,
Or the midnight of the camp,
What revealings faint and far,
Stealing down from moon and star,
Kindled in that human clod
Thoughts of destiny and God?

WHITTIER.

### *The Benue River*

AT Lokoja I had an unexpected and unwelcome delay of three weeks. A portion of my goods had been forwarded direct from London, and though the bulk had arrived, my [illegible] and ammunition still lay detained at Forcados. Now I had previously arranged to meet my fellow-countrymen belonging to the South African Branch of the Sudan United Mission by the 28th February. The rendezvous was to be Abinsi—a town on the south bank of the Benue, distant about a hundred and sixty-five miles from Lokoja. One hundred and sixty-five miles is not far, I know—in England; a three hours' run by train will easily account for it. But one hundred and sixty-five miles is a very different proposition in Central Africa; ten days is the least you can allow for it. Imagine then my feelings when I saw the days from the 14th to the 28th February slipping away, and with them my hardly acquired reputation for punctuality. Africa, so I have read in historical treatises, is the grave of reputations; and mine lies buried at Lokoja.

I shall not ask you, gentle reader, to tarry fuming and fretting with me at the juncture of Niger and Benue. I

shall merely ask you to sympathise with me, if you can, as you see me making large and ever larger drafts upon my slender stock of patience, while *per contra* the tide of annoyance is rising higher and higher, and overflowing more and more in a flood which all the philosophy of Mr. Alvarez is as powerless to assuage as the broom of Mrs. Partington was able to dam back the Atlantic. The calendar showed *Wednesday 4th March* before the steamer bearing my goods was sighted. My canoe was already packed, and after completing the customs formalities with an expedition unknown in Lokoja, I leapt on board, we sheered off, and under the propulsion of four muscular polers shot out across the stream, and within a few minutes were on the broad, quiet bosom of the Benue. My transcontinental journey had fairly begun. With few divergences to right or to left I kept steadily on from this point, until on the 16th of December I smelt the breezes of the Indian Ocean at Mombasa.

The canoe which I had secured was one of the largest of the native craft plying on the Benue. I am sorry I did not take accurate measurements, but its length was certainly not less than fifty feet, with a breadth of four and a half. So large a canoe I never sailed in, either before or since. And to think that it was hewn out of a single tree-trunk! I found myself wondering how these natives, with their very elementary knowledge of the principles of mechanics, could have conveyed a trunk of such dimensions to the water-side. Well, this mighty boat was provided with two mat-covered shelters, one for myself and the other for my luggage. Between the two was an open space, where I sat when the day was young, and dined when it was dying in the west. The bow of our craft was partially decked over, and just aft of this deck was a large earthen pot, which represented the kitchen-stove. At first I regarded this primitive cuddy with undisguised contempt, but when I found that my cookee (named Kuku) brought me well-prepared meals and excellent bread from this apology for a stove, my contempt was transformed into admiration.

The Benue River is the largest tributary of the Niger, and indeed at their confluence it is difficult to determine which river carries the largest volume of water. During the rainy season it is navigable by river steamers for five hundred and

fifty miles from its junction with the Niger, that is to say, as far as Garua in North Kamerun. When the waters subside steamer navigation ceases, and the traveller has to betake himself to the slow-moving canoe. The country through which the Benue courses is flat, exceedingly so. When you have reached Ibi, which lies six hundred miles or so from the mouth of the Niger, you have only attained an altitude of six hundred feet above sea-level. The river-banks afford no captivating sights. In nature, it would seem, beauty and utility stand in a definite relation to each other, beauty being inversely proportioned to utility, and utility inversely proportioned to beauty. There is little variety of scenery on the Benue. Viewed from a canoe its banks are seen to be grass-covered and reed-fringed, while the low, dark forest presents a perfectly level and almost unbroken background.

The Benue is a great commercial highway. Its basin is one of the most populous areas of Northern Nigeria. Travelling on the lower Benue, we constantly passed canoes and barges of all kinds and sizes conveying goods, livestock, and human beings up or down the river. It was quite interesting to watch a family removal. Paterfamilias on such occasions loads all his earthly possessions into his solitary canoe, which is crowded to suffocation with sheep, goats, pigs, fowls, ducks, pigeons, wife or wives, children, sweet potatoes, yams, millet, hides, pots, clothing, agricultural implements, and fish-nets. When the gunwale has sunk to within an inch of the water-line, the canoe is gently poled to mid-stream and the high adventure commences. It is almost impossible to avoid shipping water, so wives and children are armed with calabashes and broken pots for baling purposes. I have no doubt that catastrophes do sometimes occur, but they are very rare; and apart from a wetting and the disappearance perhaps of an axe or a hoe, there is no loss of life, for in these regions everything that has breath has swimming (or at least floating) ability.

At nights we are anchored fast to the shore, the crew tumbles overboard, and pleasant fires are kindled. The evening meal is soon disposed of, and without more ado the polers stretch their mats and address themselves to slumber. Kuku is detained a few moments longer, cleaning the crockery. The *baas* flings himself into a hammock-chair, gazes dreamily at the star-spangled sky, and falls to reflecting on scenes that

have vanished. Presently he too creeps under his mosquito-net, examines it carefully by electric torch for traces of his hereditary enemies, and when satisfied that they have been completely dislodged, composes himself to sleep. It is the hot and dry season immediately preceding the rains, so that no tent is needed and the vast, overarching vault of heaven is the only canopy. In a few minutes silence reigns, broken only by the disconsolate chirp of a benighted bird, the deep bass of a full-throated choir of frogs, and the swish and swirl of the stream as it eddies round our motionless canoe. As soon as the faintest blush shows itself in the distant east, the master turns upon his couch, consults his watch, and sounds a vigorous call on his whistle. 'Tashi, tashi!' he shouts. The merest movement is visible on the part of four ghostly figures that lie stretched on the sandy bank. Again a stentorian summons: 'Modu, Dia, mutane, tashi, mazza, mazza!' (Modu, Dia, you fellows, get up quickly.) At length we are all awake, a cup of early coffee is hastily swallowed, basket and bed are repacked and stowed snugly on board, and the voyage of another day commences.

The days succeeded each other with monotonous regularity. My journal sums up the events of nine days in fifty-one lines. On the evening of the tenth day we reached Abinsi, a place which is destined to acquire considerable importance, for the railway connecting the Bauchi tin-fields with the coast is to cross the Benue at a point not many miles below the present township. When we moored up to the bank it was already pitch dark. I was anxious to discover whether the friends whom I expected had arrived. It was a matter of some difficulty, at that time of night, to find any one who could answer a question addressed to him in plain English. Hausa is so universally spoken by Europeans that few natives have the opportunity, and fewer still the ability, to master a sentence or two of Anglo-Saxon. However, diligent search revealed a gentlemanly negro, in the person of the local agent of the Royal Niger Company, who was able to give an intelligible answer to my queries. Two days ago, he said, a couple of white men had been inquiring whether any traveller had recently arrived from the west. But where these white men were just now, whether they had taken their departure or whether they were still in Abinsi, deponent knew not. Armed with a lantern and preceded by

NATIVE DUG-OUT ON THE BENUE

a guide, I prosecuted my search. Three-quarters of a mile away lay the Government buildings, where one or two huts were detached to act as rest-houses. Possibly my compatriots were lodged there. We picked our way over the uneven road, saw lights gleaming under the trees, and as we approached I recognised my friends, who were just about to retire for the night. It was a joyful meeting.

### *Into Munchi-land*

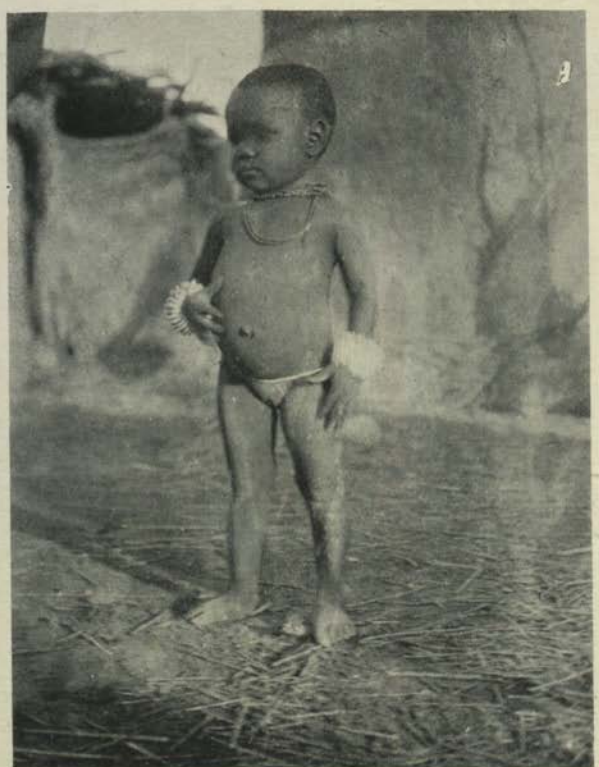
The next day we set out for a tour through the Munchi country. Troubles with carriers confront the African traveller at every turn. No expedition is complete without them. They meet you on the threshold of your undertaking, they crowd about you midway, and they assail you at its close when payment has to be made for services rendered. Our tale of carriers was short, and seven more had to be found. We haunted the local market, either in person or by deputy, for the best part of a day, and at length secured our men. There was no way of retaining them but by instantly placing a load upon their heads. When the new man had been thus effectually harnessed, the old ones were nowhere to be found. Great searchings of heart ensued. The missing men were ultimately discovered around the beer-pots, and when we got fairly away it was near sunset. Through the gathering dark we stumbled on with our motley crew, encouraging the willing, prodding the lazy, and steadying the semi-drunken. The countryside appeared to me to be completely void of villages and inhabitants, but at near nine o'clock our leader called a halt and we camped at the roadside. Next morning I discovered that there was a Munchi town hard by, and there we rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

Postponing for the present a fuller account of the Munchi tribe, let me just tell you enough to give you a clear idea of the *modus operandi* when we arrived at one of their villages. People at home have frequently the most mistaken notions as to how the traveller in the African wilds acts and ought to act. They imagine that he tramps along all day at random, and at nightfall pitches his tent on a bit of greensward, with a purling brook a few yards off. If their imagination is sufficiently developed they will probably also discover a herd of game, which at the psychological moment (*i.e.* when the

pot is just at the boil) come roaming into sight, and the fattest of which the infallible marksman knocks over with a shot from his rifle. Such is the picture, conjured up by an imagination that has been garnished with scenes from the *Swiss Family Robinson*. But it does not correspond to actualities. It is seldom that the traveller wanders along in the casual fashion referred to above. I do not think that it happened more than a score of times in my two years' journeyings. There is always some definite objective to aim at, and a good deal of the traveller's time is devoted to just questioning the natives as to the route, listening to divergent answers, and sitting in critical judgment on their relative value and importance. Seldom too does he pitch his tent in the wilds. There are times when this is unavoidable, since no suitable village offers. But almost always the traveller follows beaten routes, on which the stages are clearly defined in such a way that he generally reaches a village by sundown. There he can obtain food for his men, who otherwise would have to burden themselves with their own provisions as well as the heavy load which the white man lays upon them. There he is sure of water and fuel, and of a gift of fowls and eggs to eke out his own scanty fare. The idea that a herd of antelope lurks around every corner, merely waiting for the huntsman to come and find them, is a delusion which is soon dispelled in Central Africa. My weapons came to hand, as we have seen, at Lokoja early in March, but it was two months later before I secured my first antelope.

To return from this digression. In the centre of every Munchi village is seen a roomy hut, generally without walls. It is the palaver-hut, where the village chief hears and settles all manner of disputes, where the village counsellors debate questions of public policy, and where the villagers generally discuss each other and each other's affairs. The subjects round which their thoughts and their talk revolve are strictly limited in number; nor can the number be increased, for these poor people, hidden away in the bush, live in absolute isolation, with hardly a single avenue of communication with the outside world. What an event it is when a white man, or a triad of white men, drops in upon their solitude! It is more than an event; it is an epoch—a momentous, outstanding epoch in the dead-level continuity of village and tribal life. 'It is five moons since the white man was here.'

COMING FROM THE GARDENS



COWRY-SHELLS HER ONLY ADORNMENT

'In the year when the white man visited us'—thus they date the events of their unchequered existence. In the course of two years' travelling I have conferred upon the African natives no greater boon than this, that I passed through many hundreds of villages, stirring the current of their sluggish lives, introducing a new factor, awakening a new interest, and supplying a subject for inexhaustible talk and illimitable speculation. This alone ought to stamp me as one of the greatest benefactors of African humanity. Men have been knighted for less.

Our Munchi village, which, like many scores of unnamed towns which I passed, must remain anonymous, conformed to the regulation pattern. We entered, found the central hut where the pulse of the community beats the most strongly, piled up our boxes and sat down. Food was forthcoming, and also the indispensable water and fuel; likewise the sick and the halt and the blind, to whom, following our great Exemplar, we gave such skill and such medicines as we had at our disposal. For the first time in the history of that village the people heard a name unknown to Munchi ears, unchronicled in Munchi tradition—the name of 'Yesu.' They heard it in the songs we sang, for our missionaries have already composed one or two Munchi hymns; they heard it in the words we spoke; they heard it in the prayers which we offered to an invisible Divinity, who, from the way in which we addressed Him, they concluded could not be very far distant. Will they ever hear that Name again?

We passed many more villages and towns on our way to the South African field, receiving everywhere courteous treatment and friendly entertainment. The Munchi country, at the time of my visit, was supposed to be unsafe for the ordinary traveller, and my companions had to obtain from the Resident a special permit for us to pass through its midst. But I can testify that we encountered on our march a peaceful, contented and industrious people. They are both a pastoral and an agricultural community. Their cattle are of small size, but are greatly prized, and a Munchi demands as much as £6 for a cow. At Ibi or at Yola you could buy a good horse for less. They are great hunters, and we constantly met small companies of young men bound for the hunting-field—a bow in the left hand, a quiver full of poisoned arrows slung across the back, with its mouth just over the right

shoulder, and strapped to the palm of the right hand a wicked-looking knife. Hunting is most keen during the dry season: the game is carefully rounded up into an area of dry grass, the herbage is fired, and the hunters, who are posted at the likeliest spots, inflict great execution upon the terrified animals.

### *Pagans and Mohammedans*

Continuing our march in an easterly direction, we crossed the Katsena River on the third day after leaving Abinsi. As the river was low we waded through without difficulty, the stream being about two hundred yards in breadth, and nowhere much deeper than the waist. On the eastern bank we reached a village, the chief of which showed us exceptional kindness, and brought abundance of food-stuffs both for our men and for ourselves. During the wet season the Katsena is navigable, by barge and by canoe, to a point beyond the important town of Katsena Allah, and it is unnecessary to do more than suggest the urgent necessity for a mission on its banks. The Munchi at present are still pagans, who in quite recent times defended themselves with the utmost valour against all attempts to subdue and enslave them. By their sturdy independence they succeeded in stemming the tide of Mohammedan invasion. But with the establishment of European rule a new tide has begun to flow—the tide of Mohammedan trade and culture—which bids fair to secure a peaceful victory over the Munchi people. Hence the challenge to Christian missions to hearken to the 'sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees,' and to bestir themselves.

After a march of one hundred and ten miles from Abinsi, we reached the field occupied by the South African section of the Sudan United Mission. I spent some three weeks with my countrymen and co-religionists, enjoying their hospitality, discussing their problems, and gathering strength for the strenuous undertaking before me. Followed by their good wishes, and accompanied as far as Ibi by two of their number, I departed on the 6th April, *en route* for the Benue, *via* Donga and Wukari. At both of these towns the Sudan United Mission (American Section) has planted itself in an effort to reach the Jukun tribe. The Jukuns, who according to their tribal traditions migrated long ago from Kordofan, are now

a decadent people, their different units are somewhat widely scattered, and there are not wanting signs that they will ultimately go down before the Mohammedan onset. The towns of Donga and Wukari are already largely Mohammedan, about one-half of the population of each having adopted the religion of the prophet of Mecca.

The old chief of Wukari is thoroughly convinced of the truth that compromise is the essence of statesmanship. Asked by Mr. Guinter, the missionary, why he does not send his children to the mission school, he shrugs his shoulders and puts the counter-question whether a father ought to favour one child and neglect the others. 'Of course not,' replies the missionary. 'Well,' says the wily old man, 'the people of Mohammed and the people of Isa (Christ) are both my children: I cannot frown on the one and smile on the other.' The experience of the missionaries in all parts of Africa is the same: wherever Islam has entered the progress of Christianity is greatly retarded.

Casting a retrospective glance at the work of the Sudan United Mission in Nigeria, I count myself fortunate to have visited, including the Freed Slaves' Home at Rumasha, seven of its stations. The enterprise is still in its early stages. No Christian congregations have as yet been founded, and few converts have been gathered. Each station has its school, attended by a score or so of pupils, but there has not been much opportunity for establishing out-schools and preaching-stations, since there is no adequate supply of native teachers. The experience of older mission-fields would suggest the wisdom of at once taking in hand the training of teacher evangelists, and of establishing for that purpose a central institution at Ibi or elsewhere. The value of the S.U.M. as a pioneering agency can hardly be overestimated. It was the first to draw the attention of the Christian Church to the immense territories of the Western and Eastern Sudan, which together form the most extensive unevangelised area in the world. It was the first to address itself to the task of attempting to occupy these lands. And to-day its gaze is still constantly directed to the far interior with its unreached millions, while it cherishes the hope of linking up, by an uninterrupted series of stations, its work in Northern Nigeria with its work in the Egyptian Sudan. May that hope soon come to glad fruition!

### *The Munchi Tribe*

Before bringing this chapter to a close I should like to give some account of the Munchi tribe among whom we South Africans are now at work, since the information to be found in older volumes of travel is exceedingly scanty. Tribal tradition says that the ancestors of the Munchi came from the south, and that at some not very remote period they crossed a great river, which may possibly be the Ubanghi, in their northward migration. Like the children of Ephraim they were armed and carried bows, but unlike the latter they did not turn back in the day of battle. On the contrary, they moved slowly and steadily onward, driving before them the weaker pagan population, and resisting successfully, as I have said above, the attempted encroachment of the Moslems from the north. Recent observers have noted the fact that the Munchi are not stationary even yet, but are still pressing forward, portions of the tribe having already crossed the Benue.

The name Munchi is said to be a Hausa word signifying 'cannibals.' Now it is true that *mun chi* in Hausa does mean 'we eat,' but it is rather anomalous that the Hausa people, on meeting an unknown tribe, should call them 'we eat,' and not rather 'they eat.' The etymology of *Munchi* does not seem to be beyond suspicion, especially since I find in Crowther's account of the Macgregor Laird expedition of 1854, that the tribe is called the Mitshis. In any case Munchi or Mitshi is a foreign name. The people call themselves by quite another appellation, namely Tivi. As to this name tradition again has something to say. All human beings are descended from a certain Tukuruka and his wife Yulen. From this union sprang three families of men, which are the Nasra or white race, the Tivi, and the Uke, which last comprises all other families of the human race. The Tivi, apparently, have 'a guid conceit o' themselves': all other black races are classed together under the category Uke, *i.e.* 'barbarians.'

The Munchi are held by most writers to be cannibals, but it does not appear to me that the evidence is conclusive. It is a case of giving the dog a bad name and then hanging him. Crowther was probably nearer the truth when he wrote, in the work I have referred to above: 'We were told that the

A MISSION-STATION IN ITS FIRST STAGE (SALATU, NORTHERN NIGERIA, IN 1914)

Mitshis were cannibals and that they devour the bodies of their enemies killed in war. But I am inclined to believe that this act of savageness is only practised in time of war to terrify their enemies, and is not an habitual thing.'

The whole tribe is subdivided into a number of clans, such as the Shetire, Kumu, Tongovo, Gwondo, Nongovo, and Tombo clans. There is no king or paramount chief with authority over the whole tribe, and the government is in the hands of lesser chiefs of varying rank, the highest being the *tor*, and after him the *mue*, *kuru*, and *mandaki*. They are supported by an administrative and advisory council, the *mbatamena*, which is composed of the elders of the clan. These chiefs are endowed with some small authority, and have the right to punish, by fine or corporal chastisement, the more venial offences of their little communities. The fines exacted go, as is but just and equitable, into the pockets of the parties that have sustained the damage, and are not appropriated, as is the case in our highly civilised states, by the paternal government.

## *Occupations and Industries*

The Munchi are an industrious people, and may be seen at any time of day toiling away in their gardens. As a rule they have a double set of cultivated fields, and from each of these they collect two harvests per annum, giving them four reapings every year. This implies heavy toil. They raise the following crops: maize (*ikureke*), millet (*amine*), kaffir-corn (*uwa*), cotton (*moö*), yams (*iyo*), beniseed (*ishwa*), beans (*aleve*), monkey-nuts (*abunu*), ground beans (*ahi*), pumpkins (*akbaddu*), calabashes (*kucha*, *kwesse*), cassava (*rogo*), and sweet potatoes (*atsakka*). They also grow the following kinds of fruit: bananas (*korkombo*), papaws (*buere*), and squash (*furum*). The animals which they breed are: cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, fowls, Muscovy ducks, pigeons, and dogs; and they have of late years introduced from their neighbours the horse, the donkey, and the cat.

Various handicrafts are practised, chiefest of which is weaving. The thread is spun from the products of the cotton-plant or of the bombax tree, and in this work any one may engage. It is a common sight in a Munchi village to see men, women, and children engaged in drawing out a

bundle of cotton to a long, slender thread, and stretching these threads across any clean open space, into which babies and straying curs cannot intrude. But while the making of thread is the employment of all, weaving is the strict monopoly of the male sex. It is generally performed on a framework of wood with a bobbin that is driven from side to side. Munchi cloth is strong and durable, and forms a standard of value for the tribe. A piece of cloth of definite and invariable size is called *tukudu*, and possesses the value of half-a-crown. The Munchi also smelt and fashion their own iron. In every village the smith is a personage of considerable importance, who because of his skill and general utility is exempt from the agricultural labour which each member of this communistic state is expected to contribute to the common weal. His furnace is a construction of clay, and the bellows is made of two goatskins, which are vigorously pressed by a perspiring small boy. From the smithy come such indispensable implements as axes, knives, adzes, pickaxes, pincers, razors (extremely primitive), arrow-heads, pipes, and bolts. Armed with their axes, their adzes, and their knives, the Munchi prove themselves to be no mean carpenters, and they manufacture mortars, bedsteads, chairs, beams, thresholds, and doorways.

I have already made some reference to the hunting proclivities of this people. They are armed with little beyond their bows and poisoned arrows. It is very interesting to watch a Munchi when he engages in the delicate operation of dipping his arrow-heads into the poison prepared for them. The deadly mixture is carefully spread over half an inch of the arrow-head, and the arrow is then laid to dry in a notch upon an upright wooden structure. Great care must of course be exercised that no little child or small animal comes into contact with the dangerous weapon, for the poison is exceedingly swift in its action. It is obtained from a tree, which exudes a milky sap, but whose botanical name I do not know. Boyd Alexander tells us, in his valuable book *From the Niger to the Nile*, that Munchi hunters make use of the following stratagem in order to approach their quarry. Covering their heads with the mask of the ground hornbill, and swaying to and fro after the manner of that bird, they approach on hands and knees to within a short arrow's flight. The Bushman, we know, used to reach his prey by disguising himself in the skin of the ostrich; and this seems a perfectly

credible statement, for the ostrich is a large bird and the Bushman is one of the smallest of humankind. But it is somewhat of a strain upon our faith to be told that a well-set-up Munchi of nearly six feet high can conceal himself under the plumage of a diminutive bird like the hornbill. It must be either a very gullible antelope or a very gullible reader that can be so easily deceived.

### *Courtship and Marriage*

Courtship and marriage occupy a prominent place in the social life of the Munchi. When he has arrived at manhood the young Munchi leaves home to seek a wife. He may not marry within his own family, and as that family comprises pretty well every member of his village, he is forced to go abroad. He decks himself in all the finery which passes for fashion in Munchiland. His body is smeared from head to foot with a red pigment made from the pounded bark of a certain tree. When this has dried sufficiently, he throws cross-wise over his shoulder a sash of blue cloth, tied under the arm with a red tassel. Round his waist he wears a broad band with alternate black and dark blue stripes, and to this is attached a neat leather pouch. In his hand he may carry a native spear, or, it may be, an old European flint-lock musket, that has frequently done duty on similar occasions. Thus garbed our youthful dandy stalks through the land, the admired of all admirers. At any village he may chance upon he stops and looks around. He sees a maiden who meets with his approval. No introduction is necessary: he merely sits down and watches her at her task, whether it be spinning cotton, pounding grain, shelling beans or boiling plantains. After a while a few words are exchanged. Mutual liking springs up, and our swain, who cannot by any stretch of imagination be described as lovesick, gives the maiden to understand that he is satisfied, and will now moot the question of marriage to her father. The latter raises no obstacles, and the prospective bridegroom thereupon presents him with four *tukudu* of cloth, of the approximate value of ten shillings. This is by way earnest-money, for the real payment is still to come. The deal, however, is complete, and the bridegroom is said *ngohor kwassa*, to receive a wife. Marriage by capture is not unknown among the Munchi, though it belongs to an

age that is past. The customary marriage, however, is by exchange, a sister being given in exchange for a wife, or a certain number of oxen being tendered.

An interesting ceremony, part of which I was fortunate enough to witness, takes place on the night of the nuptials. The bridegroom sets off in the afternoon of the auspicious day to fetch his bride. As soon as dusk has fallen they leave her village for the home of the bridegroom. When they draw near a loud shout announces their proximity. The friends of the bridegroom then make their appearance, cover the head of the bride with a piece of cloth, and conduct the bridal pair to the village. On their arrival, the ceremonies take another turn. A man, probably the professional priest or soothsayer, mounts a tree, and in a stentorian voice calls down the most awful curses upon the head of any one who shall venture to ravish, seduce or in any way harm the bride. No sooner does his voice cease than the crowd sounds a weird refrain of moans and groans, of shouts and curses. The priest then resumes, and repeats his objurgatory formula, followed by the united *Amen* of the people. This antiphon is repeated seven times, after which the priest descends from his perch and mingles with the crowd. The whole ceremony, which can be paralleled from many parts of the world, is suggestive of the honour in which the Munchi hold the marriage institution.

Meanwhile the village gives itself to great rejoicings. A dense throng clusters round the happy couple, so that the mere spectator sees nothing but a living mass of humanity moving forward slowly to the beat of the drums and the singing of the guests. In thus crowding round the bridal pair the circle of friends intend to secure, I suppose, both concealment from a too intrusive curiosity and protection from possible spells and enchantments. The further ceremonies are protracted till deep into the night. They consist, *inter alia*, of the following: the payment to the bride's father of the purchase price of his daughter; the reception of the bride into her husband's house and the presentation of the marriage gifts; and, frequently, the performance, upon the raised platform which is seen in almost every Munchi village, of a ceremonial dance in honour of the wife who has been added to the population.

The dress of the Munchi is of a rather nondescript character.

I have already pictured the young suitor in all his finery. When garbed for their ordinary occupations the men wear little that is distinctive—a waistcloth or a bit of tanned skin and perhaps a string of beads. The women usually have around the waist a piece of cloth that falls to the knees. Several strings of beads are hung about the neck: little bands of beadwork are drawn tightly round the upper arm: there are copper bracelets on the wrists and ankles, and frequently pieces of copper wire are fixed very tightly round the leg just below the knee. They have a very effective pattern of tattoo-marks on the abdomen, with the navel as centre, and sometimes there is a bit of semicircular tattooing on the temples. Boys and girls wear nothing but an occasional string of beads; in fact girls are not permitted to assume cloth until they are married, though they may put on a girdle of beadwork.

### *The Munchi Language*

I crave the indulgence of my readers if I say a word or two, before closing this chapter, on the Munchi language. The first to give to the world a vocabulary of the Munchi language was that diligent philologist S. W. Koelle, who in his monumental *Polyglotta Africana*, published in 1853, gave an extensive list of words in the 'Tiwi' speech. In his introductory remarks he says: 'Tiwi is called Midsi or Mbidsi by the Kurorofas (*i.e.* the people of Wukari) and Hausas, and Gbalou by the Agayas, who speak the same language. [I obtained my information] from Disile, or John Cocker, of Waterloo, born in the town of Mukuwa, where he grew up, married four wives, and had a child about nine years of age when he was taken in war by the Genyi, who had come a great distance, and sold him to Mbagba, *i.e.* Hausa, whence he was brought to the sea by way of Igala, where he was detained one year. He has been in Sierra Leone twenty years.' Crowther, who published the *Journal of the Expedition* in 1855, gave a short vocabulary of Mitshi (*i.e.* Munchi) words, in the supposition that he was describing a totally unknown language; but Dr. Bleek, the great Bantu philologist, pointed out that Koelle's fuller list of Munchi words had already seen the light two years previously.

The Munchi language reveals not the slightest resemblance

to the Bantu type of African speech. It is indeed a Melchizedek of a language, without any traceable descent from parent tongues, and without any known relations to which it bears even the most superficial likeness. Koelle places it under the category of unclassified and isolated languages, 'being languages which do not evince a striking glossarial affinity with any of the languages previously enumerated, or with one another.' At that we may leave it. The origin of the Munchi language is as obscure as the origin of the Munchi people. The two problems are dependent upon one another. Had we any definite knowledge as to the cradle of the Munchi race, we might find some light cast upon the primitive Munchi speech. On the other hand, could we discover a language with a family resemblance to the Munchi tongue, we might derive from it a suggestion as to the original home of the tribe. But we have neither, and the whole question is wrapped in that profound darkness that broods over the past of the Dark Continent.

# CHAPTER VII

## TRAVELS BY WATER AND BY LAND

A wanderer is man from his birth.
He was born in a ship
On the breast of the River of Time.
Brimming with wonder and joy
He spreads out his arms to the light,
Rivets his gaze on the banks of the stream.

Vainly does each as he glides
Fable and dream
Of the lands which the River of Time
Had left ere he woke on its breast,
Or shall reach when his eyes have been closed.

Who can see the green earth any more
As she was by the sources of Time?
Who imagines her fields as they lay
In the sunshine, unworn by the plough?
Who thinks as they thought,
The tribes who then roamed on her breast,
Her vigorous, primitive sons?

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

### *By Canoe to Lau*

IBI, situated on the left bank of the Benue, is a town of some seven thousand inhabitants and the centre of administration for the Muri province. It is the chief market of the middle Benue, for which reason it attracts individuals of all tribes, from Takum in the south, Bauchi in the north, and Yola and Bornu in the north-east. Because of this mixture of races and the consequent relaxation of tribal discipline, it has been called a hotbed of vice (Boyd Alexander). The mission buildings occupy a plot of ground on the outskirts of the town, and are situated at a considerable distance from the river bank.

At Ibi I secured a canoe forty-five feet in length and about three in breadth wherewith to continue my journey up the Benue. I wanted the owner of this craft to undertake to convey me to Yola, but he shook his head emphatically,

and stated that the water was so low at this time of year, that he could hardly even guarantee to deliver me at Lau, which was very little more than half the distance to be accomplished. However, on the principle that half a loaf is better than no bread I closed with the offer, requiring only that the skipper should land me at Lau within a certain specified time. But this he was equally unwilling to do, nor could any blandishments prevail upon him to supply more than two polers. To the inevitable therefore I yielded, with what grace I could command. On the 11th April we embarked—myself, my two personal boys, the two polers, and about twenty-three loads forming the whole complement and cargo. Except that it lasted longer, the voyage was a repetition of the canoe journey from Lokoja to Abinsi. The days were monotonous, the scenery negligible, and the heat, though tempered by a fresh breeze in the early part of the day, oppressive in the afternoon. The chief diversions were potting away at the spur-winged geese that frequented every sandbank, and falling into shallows from which we only succeeded in extricating ourselves by dint of the most strenuous exertions. Never shall I forget our efforts, during the last few days of the river journey, to haul, push, thrust, pull and heave our unwieldy boat through the sands. Every now and then our polers, divesting themselves of the few rags which formed their ordinary uniform, would scramble overboard, then sit deliberately down in the shallow water, and with fingers and nails begin to scrape a channel for our vessel. At times, again, every soul on board—passengers as well as crew—would be impressed into the work, would plash over the gunwale, set hands and shoulders to whatever offered sufficient purchase, and with a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull all together, lift the canoe over the obstructing mass of sand. Fortunately villages were of frequent occurrence and food was plentiful. We soon reached the encampments of the 'cattle' Fulani, and I procured from them daily supplies of fresh milk, which formed a welcome change to the tinned variety. Fish too was abundant, and in this respect the Benue is one of the best of African rivers, bearing out my theory of the inverse ratio of utility to beauty. The Fulani catch their fish in large nets, and on one occasion I saw them draw to land a fine draught of fishes, the largest of which must have turned the scale at thirty pounds.

POTMAKING AT DONGA (NORTHERN NIGERIA)

A NATIVE GRANARY (NORTHERN NIGERIA)

In course of time patience and perseverance met with their reward, and we reached Lau. By this time I was quite convinced of the profound wisdom of the old skipper at Ibi in not committing himself to any promise as to the length of the journey. The nearer we drew to our destination, the more numerous and determined did the shallows become. Looking across the broad river basin we were confronted by a sea of sandbanks, through which it seemed wholly impossible to drive our boat, unless it were supplied with wheels in lieu of paddles. One morning we were sweating away for an hour and a half, at the lapse of which we had progressed less than five hundred yards. It was heart-breaking work. But we did eventually arrive, and I can assure you that my boys and I evacuated the poor old stranded canoe with the utmost cheerfulness and celerity.

The friendly resident at Ibi, Mr. Haughton, had supplied me with a letter of recommendation to the *sariki* (*i.e.* chief) of Lau. What this missive contained I knew not, for it was written in the Hausa language, which I understood but indifferently, and in the Hausa script, which I understood not at all. But whatever its contents were, it acted like a charm. The *sariki* himself soon made his appearance at the compound reserved for European passers-by, and with profound obeisances asked how he could serve me. My requirements were simple, and were simply expressed: I wanted a little food, a horse, and twenty-three carriers. More obeisances, and the departure of the *sariki* and retinue. Fowls and eggs were soon forthcoming. Presently a steed was led into the enclosure, held in restraint by two muscular natives, as though he were the most spirited and fiery animal in all Nigeria. Much impressed, I proceeded to look him over in detail. An inspection of his teeth revealed the fact that he was old; ocular examination demonstrated that he was one-eyed; a ride of less than half a mile proved beyond dispute that he was stiff in the limbs and inclined to stumble; and finally, vigorous applications of the *sjambok* (or switch of hippo hide) satisfied me that he was both lazy and pachydermatous. These qualifications were so indisputable that they decided me to purchase him as he stood, and I agreed with the vendors upon the purchase-price of five pounds sterling. Nor was my confidence in Polyphemus—as I christened him—misplaced. He bore me, with uncomplaining fortitude, a

distance of six hundred miles to Fort Archambault; he bore with me when at times, in a fit of momentary abstraction, I let my whip descend upon him with more than necessary vigour. He forbore to rear, kick, bite, jib and back, or to indulge in any of those practices by which a horse delights to show his mettle and breeding. Because of all these virtues, somewhat negative I confess, but none the less real, I grew attached to Polyphemus, and parted from him with regret. At Fort Archambault I found a purchaser for him, in spite of manifest depreciation, at £3, 8s., so that my journey of six hundred miles cost me, in horseflesh, no more than £1, 12s.

### *To Yola*, via *a primitive tribe*

The distance overland from Lau to Yola is ninety miles, which we accomplished in six days. The friendly *sariki* of Lau supplied me with twenty-three muscular carriers—the first, and very far from the worst, of a succession of carriers, totalling probably some seven or eight hundred, by whose services I was able to cross and re-cross the Continent. Our route took us through the country of the Bamga pagans, which lies at a general level of one thousand feet above the sea. We traversed it at the height of the dry season, and only found supplies of water at infrequent intervals, but it must be a well-watered country during the rains. The thin forest, with occasional baobabs and abundant mimosa and mopani trees, diversified by rocky ironstone kopjes, forms a strong contrast to the dense tropical scenery of the Gold Coast and Lower Nigeria. The people are unclothed pagans. The women garb themselves in bunches of leaves, one in front and one behind; men and boys have a strip of cloth round the waist, or perhaps only a bunch of thongs; young girls adorn themselves with quantities of beads. Many men and women have the lobes of their ears artificially enlarged. In the ear of one man was inserted a wooden disc, which I measured and found to be two and three-quarter inches in diameter and three-quarters of an inch thick. The slender strip of ear below could not have sustained the weight of such a monstrous ornament, and so the owner had been obliged to bore a hole through its centre in order to lessen the strain. Even so he had to exercise considerable care not to move his head violently, and not to bring his ear into contact

WATER-CARRIERS AT IBI

PAGAN WOMEN OF THE BAMGA TRIBE

with any resistant object, or the lobe would have been left in ruins. Women are also apt to perforate each nostril, and to insert in the opening a small stalk of guinea-corn. This is possible because of the shape of the noses, which in the Bamga tribe are particularly flat, broad and bridgeless.

Though the population of this region is essentially pagan, the influence of Islam is widely apparent. The '*sarikin gari*' or village chief is invariably clothed in Mohammedan habiliments, and affects the long blue *riga* (upper garment) and white turban. Not infrequently he calls himself Mahmoud, Ali or Abdullah, and professes the Mohammedan religion. The Hausa or Fulani trader is everywhere *en evidence*, with his cheap cotton goods, his string or two of beads, his little bags of leather containing a charm or an amulet, and his long twists of tobacco-leaf. Then, too, I noticed that the chief enclosed his special compound with a high fence of grass, which appears to me to be an imitation of the Moslem harem, though I have occasionally seen the same practice in parts of Africa to which Mohammedan influence has not penetrated.

At most of the villages at which we halted people came forward voluntarily to beg for medicine. The most common maladies here, and all over Africa, are ulcers and sore eyes, and both are due to nothing but lack of cleanliness. How to keep clean is the one problem, next to the problem of feeding, to which the African has to address himself. He dispenses with tables and has no use for chairs: all night he sleeps on the floor, and all day he sits on the ground. His hands are almost always dirty and his body is almost always covered with dust. He possesses no wash-basin, no lavatory and no bath. The nearest water is frequently half a mile distant from the village, and the mistress of the hut resents having the precious fluid, which she has carried up the steep hill in the broiling sun for cooking purposes, diverted to such an ignoble use as bodily ablutions. And so the husband, too lazy to walk half a mile to cleanse his hands, and too fearful to beg or steal a little water from the big jar that stands in yonder corner, must fain be content to eat with unwashen hands. The children are even dirtier than their parents, and as for the piccaninnies, they scream and struggle when the worried mother, in a fit of conscientiousness, takes them firmly in hand and pours water over their wriggling bodies

from a calabash, or squirts a steady stream into their eyes and nostrils from her capacious cheeks. Where water is plentiful and accessible I have found the African as cleanly as many other nations that boast a much higher degree of culture.

One afternoon at half-past four we filed into a village which lies not many miles to the east of the important town of Chikol. The villagers, many of whom had never yet set eyes on a white face, were instantly thrown into a condition of wild excitement. Children rushed off screaming to their mothers, and timid women hid themselves in dark huts, until word went forth that the white man was of the harmless variety, and apparently not fond of human flesh. At this report, corroborated from many quarters, the frightened females began to show themselves, though at the least movement of the pale-face in their direction another stampede took place, and the courtyard was cleared as if by magic. My tent was set up, arousing great wonderment and many expressions of admiration. Such a hut, so impervious to wind and rain, so easily built and so easily demolished, was never seen! My evening meal was prepared, giving rise to great speculations, and perhaps to some palpitations of heart. What would the white man eat? When they saw him demand fowls and eggs and milk, exactly what they themselves lived on, their fears were calmed. But curiosity revived when mysterious tins were opened and placed gravely upon the table. These evidently contained the special diet of the white man, which endowed him with superhuman power and influence. These were the charms to ward off danger, the potions to dispel disease, and the *ambrosia* to confer invulnerability and immortality. On the whole, though, the sight of the stranger partaking of his evening meal tended to establish confidence. Women came forward more freely; three permitted me to attend to their eyes, though it was little I could do to effect a cure.

When night fell confidence had increased to a measure of familiarity, and the villagers proposed to give a dance in my honour. The music for the occasion was supplied by a primitive orchestra consisting of four flutes of reed and two drums. A woman with castanets attached to the ankles did the dancing—a *pas de seul*. Two young women stood by chanting, raising their right hands in time with the music,

and wriggling their bodies from the waist upwards, but maintaining the same position. The *danseuse* had little more scope; she moved round and round in a small circle, two yards in diameter. After a while the dance became general, men and women joining in, though never simultaneously. There was perfect modesty of gesture and demeanour, but after a while the dust became so overpowering that I intervened to thank the *sariki* and to dismiss the performers. In all my journeys through Africa I only once saw any indecency in connection with native dancing, and that, I regret to say, was in the presence of (and apparently at the instigation of) two or three degenerate white men. I do not for a moment deny that there are dances that are wholly evil and immoral, but they are not obtruded upon the passing traveller, and the native himself still possesses enough conscience of wrong to be thoroughly ashamed of them.

### *From Yola to Garua*

Yola, situated on the left bank of the Benue, is the capital of the province of that name. It is but little more than half a century old, but from its position has always been the centre of a busy trade. Long before the British Government had thrown the ægis of its protection over these territories, the Niger Company had established trade relationships with Yola. The town stretches away along the river bank in a straggling fashion, but the Government has settled itself at a more salubrious site on the hillside a couple of miles off. I cannot say that I have any very distinct impression of the environs of Yola, for at the time of my visit the *harmattan* blew daily and concealed the whole landscape beneath a dense and impenetrable haze. I paid a visit to the market, which for the variety of wares displayed reminded me of the markets of Abeokuta and Ibadan.

Through the kindness of the resident, Captain Gordon, I was speedily supplied with the carriers I needed for the march to Garua. Twelve of the loadsmen from Lau volunteered to proceed further, and I gladly took them on. The journey to Garua was devoid of striking incident. It was the height of the dry season, and the weather was very oppressive. Thunderstorms threatened almost every afternoon, but hardly a drop of rain fell to cool the heated atmo-

sphere. At a large town called Berndaki, where there proved to be exceptionally good accommodation for a European, I tried hard to get a brief nap with the thermometer standing at 101° in the shade; but the result was that in ten minutes' time I awoke to find my body bathed in perspiration and further slumber impossible.

On the march to Garua I secured my first few antelopes. The largest was a cow hartebeest (*bubalis major*, known locally as *kainki*). I had previously sighted a small herd of four, and followed them for some distance through the bush, but failed to get within range. As I returned towards the road, I discovered that my carriers had started another herd of five. They crossed my path at a distance of three hundred yards, passing over a broad open space of burnt grass. As they halted to gaze back at the men, I fired. My shot struck the cow behind the withers and she fell in her tracks without stirring. So suddenly did she drop that I did not even see her lie behind the short bushes, until my men running up apprised me of the fact that I had secured a good breakfast for my company. The horns were eighteen inches along the curve and nine inches from tip to tip. The forehead of the animal, from the tip of the nose to the base of the horns, measured nineteen inches, which gives some idea of the excessive length of the skull of this ungainly antelope.

Before reaching Garua I crossed the Maiotele stream into Northern Kamerun, and my route, for the next month, lay in German territory. Part of the northern portion of Kamerun is known as Adamawa, and constituted in former years an extensive emirate, of which Yola was the capital. Adamawa, as a political unit, was divided in more recent times between the English and German governments, and the authority of the emir of Yola was narrowed down to the villages immediately surrounding his capital. Garua was the headquarters of the German administration at the time of my visit, and no doubt is still the chief trade centre for Northern Kamerun.

Although the accommodation provided for me was distinctly inferior, the town itself impressed me as both populous and prosperous. It lies upon a hillside which slopes gently down to the Benue. There must have been springs or sources of some kind on the site of Garua, for although the country all around was parched and barren, the town gloried in green gardens and fertile acres. There was a crowded market,

but everything was dear as dear could be. I had to pay even for the water I used, for the Benue is far away, and the town supplies its wants, very sparingly, from wells that have been sunk in various quarters. There are mountains all about Garua, so that the eye rests upon the landscape with a satisfying sense of finitude, instead of wandering vaguely over illimitable plains that ultimately drop from sheer weariness below the sky-line.

As Garua was the last centre of civilisation I touched at before plunging into the wilderness, I procured from the Niger Company such silver—both German and French—as I deemed necessary for the two thousand mile journey to Uganda. Not one of the many persons to whom I applied could give me an approximate idea of what the overland journey would cost me *per diem*. The manager of the Niger Company at Lokoja was of opinion that I should be prepared to expend two pounds a day, but this appeared to me to be too high an estimate. Calculating the rate of pay for porters at ninepence per day, I reckoned that I should be able to manage on a pound per day. As a matter of fact my porters cost me only half a mark a day (sixpence) through German territory, and I found at the end of my trip that my daily disbursement amounted to just sixteen shillings and eightpence. Over the French roads porterage costs one franc (tenpence) per man per day; but the Belgian Government is satisfied with half a franc a day: so that though my expenses rose somewhat on the one-franc scale, I saved much more than the extra disbursement when I reached the half-franc stage. In addition to paying the porters the regular daily fee for carrying his load, the traveller is expected to provide food at every stage of the route. This does not, of course, amount to very much, perhaps not more than a halfpenny, or at the outside a penny, per man per day.

### *Troubles with my Porters*

It is marvellous how soon in Africa a certain travel-route becomes stereotyped. Let a white man journey but once from one fixed point to another, and all the natives for miles and miles around are firmly convinced that every other white man must needs pursue that identical way. There is a regular route eastwards from Garua, which is followed by

Government agents, hunters, traders and travellers generally. It leads *via* Lere, Binder, and Marua to the Lake Chad region. Now I had no intention of going to Lake Chad. My purpose was to make as directly as possible for Fort Archambault, situated on the Shari River, by way of Lai, the first French post, lying on the Logone. I applied to the office of the administration at Garua for information as to distances and resting-stages. But though the officials were friendly and sympathetic, no data of the slightest value were forthcoming. All they could tell me was that my journey lay *via* Lame, which from a study of the map I knew already. 'Bis Lame ist es sicher,' said to me Lieut. St. Suren, 'aber jenseits Lame wissen wir den Weg nicht.' (As far as Lame the route is certain, beyond it we know nothing.) There was small comfort to be derived from this reply, but acting on the assurance that as far as Lame the way was open and safe, I ventured to set out.

A number of the carriers who had accompanied me from Yola, and even from Lau, came offering their services for the journey through German territory. I was glad of this expression of confidence in me, but I thought it necessary to warn them that they were booking for a big undertaking, and that it would take three weeks or a month to finish the next stage. Yes, yes, they perfectly understood the situation, and were willing to carry my loads as far as I desired, even though it were to Fransambo (Fort Archambault) itself. On this assurance I wrote down their names, and gave each one an advance of one shilling as retaining fee. We still lacked half a dozen or so of men to make our tale complete, and these the *sarikin kasua* (market-master) undertook to find. But when the market closed for the day we were still one man short, and the trouble we encountered in filling the vacancy was endless. The day fixed for departure had come: it had nearly gone: still no applicant for the one surplus load. At length my men found one Dam Pulani, who professed to be agreeable. But when he appeared before me, something went wrong with his liver; or maybe he could not quite stomach the load assigned him. In any case he refused to pick up his package. We pleaded, we cajoled, we threatened. Half my porters had left; it was 5.30 P.M. and nearly sundown; and still Dam Pulani shook his head. I grew desperate. Seizing the obnoxious load in both arms I heaved it aloft

and deposited it upon the top of the astonished Dam Pulani's head. I dared him to put it down again. He submitted to the inevitable, and marched meekly off. But at the end of two miles he threw down the box, saying that it was much too heavy. It was now getting dark, and I was obliged to kneel down in the dusty road and take a number of articles out of the case, in order to meet the scruples of the stalwart but feeble-hearted Dam Pulani.

The road led on and on in the moonlight through the interminable forest. There were no signs of human habitation anywhere, and I had not the least idea of how far we were going nor where we were to stay overnight. At 9 o'clock we arrived at the first village, and I naturally supposed that this was our present destination. But my men shook their heads and said, 'No chop, no water, this town.' So on we went for another sixty minutes to Jibake, where there was a resthouse, which, however, was already occupied by a white man. For the next hour my loadsmen came straggling in, the bearer of the indispensable kitchen-box being, as usual, one of the last to arrive. At half-past eleven, being then more asleep than awake, I fell to discussing my long overdue supper, and at midnight I crept into bed. I had barely dropped off when my boy Sule woke me to say that rain was threatening, and that I had better shift into a hut with better protection than what I was enjoying. I followed this advice; but the rain never came, and the god of sleep, who had been so rudely driven away, refused to be lured back; so that I had a bad night, following on a bad day. It was no very auspicious commencement of the overland trek to the Shari.

Next morning my worst fears were realised: Dam Pulani had disappeared for good and all, and there was a long detention while my men scoured the countryside for a substitute. Happily a man was found and we were able to leave before the sun grew too hot, but the day's march, through a parched country, amounted to only nine miles. From the very outset of this trip I had trouble with my carriers, who marched only ten or a dozen miles and then refused to go further, pleading that there were no villages ahead at which to rest. There were daily altercations between master and men. Matters came to a head at a place called Adi, where a deputation of the porters approached me to state that they had decided to go no further. I realised that we were in for

a tussle, and said: 'Very well, just tell me who the men are who wish to turn back.' 'Every one of us,' was the answer. This was more than I had bargained for, but pretending to a confidence which I did not possess, I said boldly, 'Very good, go, and go at once; but remember, I shall write to the governor at Garua that such and such men (giving your names) agreed to carry my loads to Lai, and then threw them down at Adi and decamped, leaving me helpless in the wilderness.' With that I turned to my tent, took out writing materials and commenced a letter. The men withdrew. After the lapse of a couple of hours Bagirmi, a tall Mohammedan whom I had appointed to the post of *capita*, or overseer, looked in at the door and reported that they had considered the matter and decided to go on with me. 'How many are willing to fulfil their contract?' I asked. 'Sixteen,' was the answer. 'Let me see the men who refuse,' said I. Four of them, it appeared, had already taken French leave and were not to be found; other three came sheepishly forward, and pleaded ailments of various kinds. I examined them. One had a sore head, and could not carry a load, and the other two had been previously treated by me for indisposition. I therefore paid them the money due to them for five days' porterage, and gave them permission to go home. This left me seven men short. I then summoned the chief of the Mundang village, and told him to provide seven men to go as far as Lame. He promised to give his immediate attention to this commission, but the day slipped away and still no porters could be found. At length I pointed to five able-bodied fellows who were looking on, and said, 'These will serve my purpose.' There was some demur, but ultimately they agreed to assist me as far as the next village, and with this I had to be content. The loads were rearranged, and next morning at 4.30 we set out, my original carriers, strange to say, being in excellent humour and marching well.

The reason why my men had turned crusty now became apparent. Our road after leaving Adi took us through a trackless and uninhabited wilderness. After marching fifteen miles, we lighted upon a piece of open greensward surrounded by forest, in the centre of which were two pools of water, or *pans*, as they are styled in South Africa. This was apparently the haunt of game, but though I scoured the hillsides

for a couple of hours I saw nothing, and my men went supperless to bed. At half-past eleven that night we roused ourselves from an uneasy slumber, and started upon a midnight tramp. The moon was riding high in a cloudless sky, and the pathway stretched before us white and distinct. Seldom have I had a more unhappy ride. Try as I would I could hardly keep awake, and my eyes were generally closed while I balanced myself automatically on the back of my steed. Occasionally an overhanging branch struck me in the face or across the chest, inducing a momentary wakefulness; but in three minutes I was sunk again in somnolence. It is a marvel that I did not fall from the horse, or sustain serious damage to my physiognomy. At length I could stand it no longer, and I called a halt for half an hour, during which I snatched enough slumber to restore me to a measure of consciousness.

Travelling continuously we arrived at the Nyibi River at 7 A.M. This is a fine stream, with green, palm-grown banks, on which I discovered a boundary stone, marked FF and DD on two of its sides, and bearing the figure '28' on its top. Plainly, a stone delimiting French (FF) from German (DD) soil, according to the old division of territory before the Moroccan dispute arose. We had passed through thirty-two miles of absolutely unpeopled country since leaving Adi. Leaving this charming river, we climbed a steep hill, emerged on to an open plateau, and about three miles beyond the Nyibi reached the Mundang village of Tagobo. The inhabitants were friendly, but their homesteads were dirty, and the best accommodation which they could offer me was a hut from which the calves had just been driven. Here I treated eleven patients and drew four teeth. From this point the five men who had been loaned to me by the *sariki* of Adi returned, accompanied by a little girl of about ten, who had awakened my admiration by the way in which she kept up with the carriers, bearing on her head her father's mat and food, and over her shoulder a skin of water. Her clothing was scanty —a string round the waist and a few beads at the neck—but her courage and hardihood were beyond praise.

### *My Reception at Lame*

From Tagobo it was but a short morning's journey, through flat, deforested and uninteresting country, to Lame. As I

drew near to the town a messenger ran up and placed a letter in my hand. I looked at the superscription and read 'Herrn Missionar Bur, Lame' (Mr. Missionary Bur, Lame). Well, I said to myself, here's an unexpected surprise for you—a German missionary, settled at Lame! I had no idea that the Basle Mission, or any other mission, had pushed its outposts so far northward. But it would be delightful to meet a white man again, and trebly so to have intercourse with a Christian brother. Just then doubts began to assail me. Why should the messenger have come up to me, instead of going direct to the missionary's house at Lame? Meanwhile the man in question was trotting alongside; and when he saw me draw the letter from my pocket and look thoughtfully at the address, he made signs which I could not mistake to indicate that the missive was for myself. I opened it, and found a letter in German, accompanied by a very correct translation into English. Internal evidence soon made it clear that it was indeed intended for me. The resident of Garua, Herr von Crailsheim, expressed his regret that he was not at Garua during the time of my visit. He had heard that I proposed to travel to Lai by way of Lame. He begged of me to be very careful and on no account to attempt the direct route through the Lakka country, since the said tribe was not yet under complete control. Should I in spite of this warning persist in crossing Lakka territory, he respectfully announced that the German Government could not hold itself responsible for possible complications. This was to the point: so I sat down, as soon as I reached Lame, to indite an equally polite reply, in which I expressed to Herr von Crailsheim, in my best German, my thanks for his kind letter of warning, saying likewise that I was exercising and would always exercise the greatest circumspection in my intercourse with the natives, promising to consider carefully the alternative route he suggested, and giving the Government full absolution from all responsibility towards me, in the event of my deciding to follow the Lakka road.

But how on earth did Herr von Crailsheim come to address me as 'Herr Missionar Bur'? Ah, I have it! When discussing my route with Lieut. St. Suren, I had mentioned my name, which of course was heard only to be promptly forgotten, and had added that I was a South African Boer, a fact that was not so likely to fall into immediate oblivion.

Hence it came that I was entered into the official books at Garua—the Germans, like Captain Cuttle, always 'make a note of' these things—as 'Missionar Bur.'

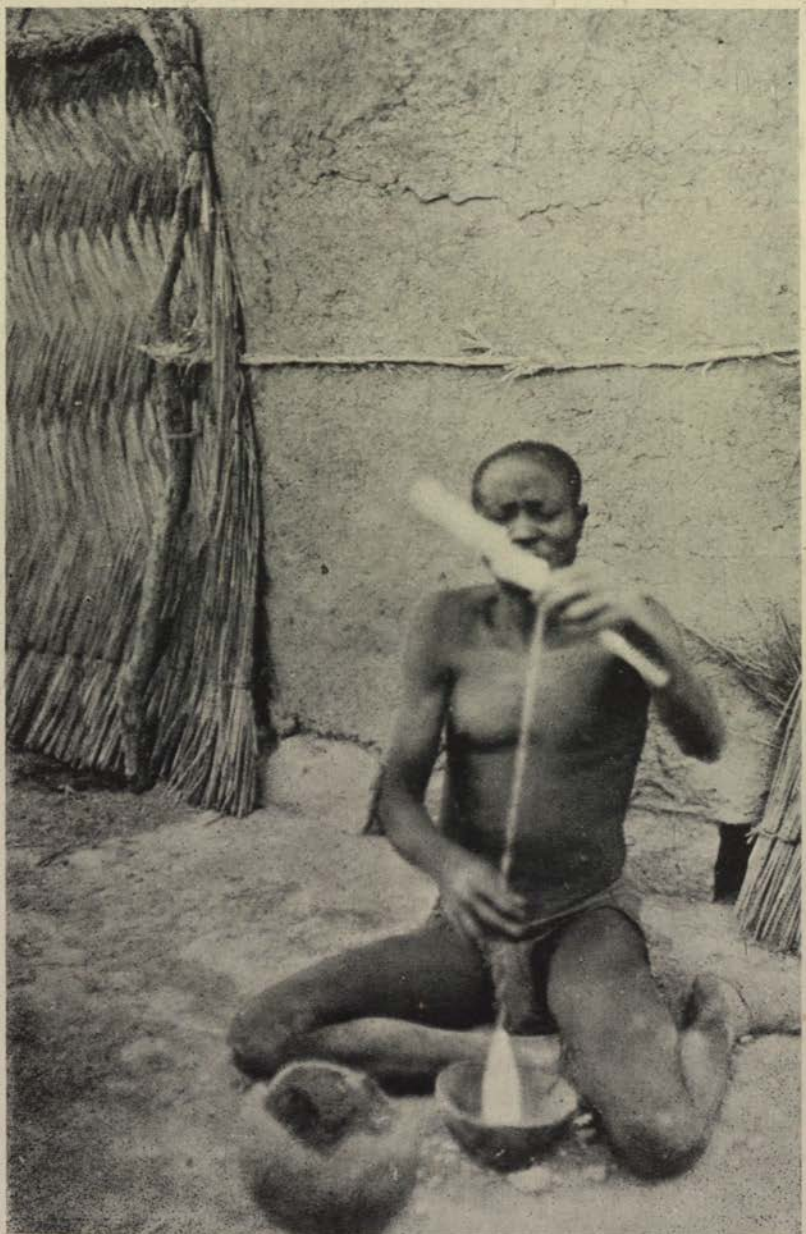
My entrance into Lame, but for one incident that was more ludicrous than sublime, was an impressive one. Not many white men pass that way. The *sariki* at Adi told me that I was the fourth white face that his town had seen in the course of its whole history. When the Lame chief found that the white man whose arrival he expected was important enough to be honoured with a special communication from the 'governor' at Garua, he decided on a public welcome. Accordingly, when I approached Lame I saw a great concourse of people, at the head of which was the *sariki* himself, mounted on a vigorous pony, with Mohammedan turban on his head and flowing robes round his body, and accompanied by a dozen mounted chiefs, each as resplendently dressed as himself. I was greeted by the raising of hands and salvos of 'sanu, sanu!' Then the procession set out for the town. The *sariki* and his bodyguard rode ahead, his men-at-arms followed on foot, next came his band, performing on drums, rams' horns and reed-flutes. And behind these rode the dust-stained white man, followed by a straggling crowd of sweating porters, shouting children and yelping curs.

Now I must premise that the town of Lame is built at intervals along the bank of a sinuous stream, which here broadens out into a series of deep pools, or *zeekoe-gaten*, as the Boers term them. Our state entry was seriously marred by the difficulty of crossing these pools. The *sariki* himself, whose mount was a sturdy one, scrambled across without disaster, but his followers were less fortunate. They plunged in valiantly enough, but their steeds were not equal to the task of struggling through the deep mud; and I observed one after the other gather up his robes and spring for the bank, only to miss his foothold and come tumbling, gala dress and all, into the muddy stream. This was vastly amusing—for those who had got safely to the other side, which I had not! When my turn came to negotiate the ford, I decided that a two-legged steed was safer than a four-legged, and handing over my pony to one of the men, I directed Suli to bear me across. And so it came to pass that we escaped all safe to land.

The Mundang are an interesting people. Though pagans,

and armed only with bow and poisoned arrows, they were able (in the days preceding the advent of European Governments) to assert their independence over against the Fulani, who sought to enslave them. They are primarily agriculturists, though they also rear cattle and breed horses. Their villages give evidence of a culture superior to that of the other surrounding tribes. A Mundang town leaves the impression of solidity: the houses are structures with thick walls and a stout roof, which is quite impervious to even the heaviest tropical showers. It is made of poles, covered with a layer of clay and grass, the whole being at least fifteen inches thick. Defended against the weather by such a roof the Mundang are perfectly dry during the wet season, and perfectly cool during the hot. For the reception of their grain they construct immense granaries, twelve or fifteen feet high, with cupola-shaped roofs, through which a small round window, covered with thick woven matting, gives access to the interior. These granaries, when viewed from a distance, look for all the world like miniature observatories. The trunk of a tree, with huge notches cut into it to serve as steps, permits the women to mount to the window. The granary is built upon a circle of stones, in order to raise it from the ground and so escape the raids of the white ants.

The old chief of Lame was sick at the time of my stay, but his son and heir, the same who came to meet me with his cavalcade, paid me every attention. He brought me to the *bariki*, which is the name assigned to the rest-house reserved for the use of a European. I suspect that the term is merely an adaptation of the English *barracks*. It was a building of the style which I have described above, with very thick roof and verandah running round. Towards evening on the day of my arrival the friendly young chief sent a two-year-old steer for my acceptance. This was the most considerable present which I have ever received in the course of my travels, and I was in doubt as to whether I ought to accept it. But my men were clamorous for fresh meat, and after I had inquired what its approximate value might be, I notified the chief that I was kindly pleased to accept the proffered gift. On leaving I presented him with the sum of seventeen shillings, which he considered a princely recompense for the young bull. When I left Lame the inhabitants, one and all, had the highest possible opinion, not merely of my generosity,



A MUNDANG MAN SPINNING THREAD

but also of my wisdom as a man and of my prowess as a huntsman. It came in this manner. I had brought with me from London a portable hornless gramophone, and from time to time I would fetch this instrument out of its case, to beguile my own tedium and to astonish the natives. When this magic box first made its weird sounds heard in Lame, the natives drew off in terror, all except the young chief, who was a most intelligent fellow. He insisted on more and yet more; and when I closed the box and packed up the instrument at the end of the morning's performance, he returned home unsatisfied. In the afternoon he was at the *bariki* again, begging for more gramophone. I was feeling very seedy, and so could not oblige him; but while I was explaining the why and the wherefore of my disinclination, a boy came to announce that two small antelopes were grazing near by. My headache was not so unbearable that I could not shoulder my rifle and creep up under shelter of some low bushes. In fifteen minutes' time I was back with a female *burrewa* (*gazella rufifrons*). The chief and his following looked at me with great respect, and I felt that my success with the rifle had considerably enhanced the prestige with which the gramophone had already endowed me. And so we parted, the *sariki* of Lame and I, with mutual expressions of hearty good will.

# CHAPTER VIII

## THROUGH PAGAN LANDS

The bed was made, the room was fit,
By punctual eve the stars were lit;
The air was still, the water ran,
No need was there for maid or man,
Where we put up, my ass and I,
At God's green caravanserai.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### *Porters and their Ways*

To the most outstanding recollections which I have of the next stage of my journey—that between Lame and Lai—belongs the continual worry I had with my carriers, by which, I fear, my temper was greatly impaired. The men who turned back at Adi left a gap in my ranks which could not be permanently repaired, and I had to fill it up from day to day, and sometimes from village to village, as best I could. Every evening I would summon the village chief and request him to furnish me with five men. In the morning when my caravan was ready to start, the five new bearers were seldom all present. There was always one who had not yet arrived, or who had run back quickly to his hamlet for an axe or a pipe, or whose wife had forgotten last night to cook him a little porridge for the journey. In this manner our departure was delayed and my patience subjected to a strain which it could not always successfully endure.

Let me recount the experiences of a typical day. I shall expand somewhat the laconic account which my diary gives of *Saturday*, 23rd *May*, 1914. I rose at four, and left Begulum at 5.10. Here I obtained six new men, who however cleared off at the first town we reached, viz., Liang. I hunted up the chief, and by the exercise of much patience and the promise of good pay succeeded in getting six fresh carriers. It was fear of punishment, evidently, more than hope of reward that persuaded them to shoulder my loads. At the

next place where I called a halt, I gave the strictest injunctions to my personal boys and my headman not to let these six new men slip through our fingers. 'You look 'em proper,' said I menacingly, in my best pidgin-English. The slippery six, however, entered a hut on the pretext of looking for water to drink, and were never seen again. Whether they escaped by an unknown back-entrance or a mysterious subterranean passage, or were simply spirited away by some local Maskelyne, I shall never know. All I know is that in less than fifteen minutes after I had set my boys to watch the hut, they came to me with long faces and reported, 'Them man he all run away for bush.'

We had to spend another weary couple of hours at this place. First of all I had to find the *sariki*, who in turn had to find the needed men. The chief disappeared after listening to the tale of my needs, and remained away for an unconscionable time, till I thought that he too had been spirited away. But at length he put in his appearance, and with him came the carriers. And, sensible man that he was, he gave me a seventh hand, who went with us nominally as guide, but in reality, I suspect, to watch the wily porters and see that they did not play me the same trick as their predecessors in office. He did his work to admiration, for we arrived at Tikem that afternoon without further mishap. In paying the porters I also tendered the guide a sixpence, which is the regulation pay in those regions for a day's work. He accepted the coin, as it seemed to me with some diffidence. Presently I saw him conferring with two of my men, who approached me and said that the guide was very thankful for the money, but would I rather give him a box of matches. I produced the lucifers, he returned the sixpence, and departed with gratification and gratitude written large on his beaming countenance. So much for the experiences of Saturday, 23rd May. Sufficient unto that day was the evil thereof.

Take again as a sample of the troubles which lay in wait for me on this stage of the route, the fortune which befell me on Friday, the 29th May. 'Rose 4.30, but found no local men for my loads, though the *sariki* had promised them the previous evening with hand upon heart. Long delay, tremendous difficulty. Immense town, but the able-bodied males have evidently got wind of the fact that the white man wants loadsmen, and have made themselves scarce.

In the end I was compelled to *impress* men as carriers. I got but three, so Suli was called on to shoulder a load, and so was a Hausa named Bindi, who had attached himself to my caravan. One of the three whom I secured was an old man, who at the end of four hundred yards collapsed completely, causing another interminable delay. Only by the exercise of great patience and forbearance did I ultimately reach Kulom, where the chief proved friendly and brought me four men, with whose aid we got as far as Begoro.' The next day my veracious diary records 'the usual trouble with men'; but happily it was the last of my worries, for on the 30th May we reached Lai, from which point the friendly French officials made themselves responsible for the supply of porters, and I had time to recover my equanimity.

Even my regular carriers, whom I had booked at Garua, caused me considerable anxiety. There were one or two quarrelsome members in my small company, and bickerings were not infrequent. I remember two occasions on which I had to intervene to stop a fight, not without risk to my own cranium, which is not quite so insensible to the stroke of a bludgeon as the hardened skulls of these desert Ishmaels. When two or three days had passed without internal friction, the monotony of the way would be broken by a free fight with the inhabitants of some village or other. One night we arrived at a place called Charo (the Germans with their love of elaboration spell it Dscharau). The chief was a little dilatory in sending me what I required, and still more so in supplying my uncomplaining pony with cereal food. Perhaps he did not perfectly understand me, for my wishes had to be conveyed to him through the medium of three languages, English, Fulani and Bana. Despairing of making him comprehend me, I seized my lantern with the one hand, and the astonished chief with the other, and led him to the place where my hungry *doki* was picketed. Striking the horse's belly I made plain to him, in signs which could not be mistaken, that it was empty. 'Now,' I said, 'go and bring food, food, food.'

I cannot say whether the somewhat curt and determined manner in which I dealt with the chief prompted my carriers to go and do likewise with the people, or whether it was the natural insolence of men who are in the employ of a European that was asserting itself; but evidently my men tried to help

themselves to provisions which were not theirs, and so precipitated a collision with the townsfolk. In a moment there was the wildest confusion. Knives were drawn and blows exchanged. Hoarse voices rent the quiet air. Finding themselves outnumbered, my men retreated in good order to the rest-house where I sat writing up my diary. They burst in upon me, seized my rifle, thrust it into my hands, and shouted excitedly, 'Massa, massa, big palaver; them bad man he cut Samati him hand.' And in proof of their assertion they produced Samati, with a finger nearly severed at the joint. I rose deliberately, replaced the rifle in its corner, and proceeded to attend to the wounded finger. My men looked on astonished at my indifference to danger. But I knew perfectly well that they were themselves the culprits, and that the peaceable Bana would never have attacked them without strong provocation. So when I had bandaged Samati's hand, I called the men together and had a few words with them. They should remember, I said, that we were strangers travelling through a strange country, that we were really the guests of the people through whose borders we passed, dependent on them for food, for guidance and for carriers, and that it was our bounden duty to entreat them courteously, if we expected courteous treatment from them. Further I uttered the warning that if any of my followers could be shown to have used violence or deceit towards the natives of the country, I would visit them with severe punishment or heavy fine. With this final threat I dismissed the assembly. They retired in a very crestfallen condition, but I am glad to say that from that day forth there was no more friction with local villagers.

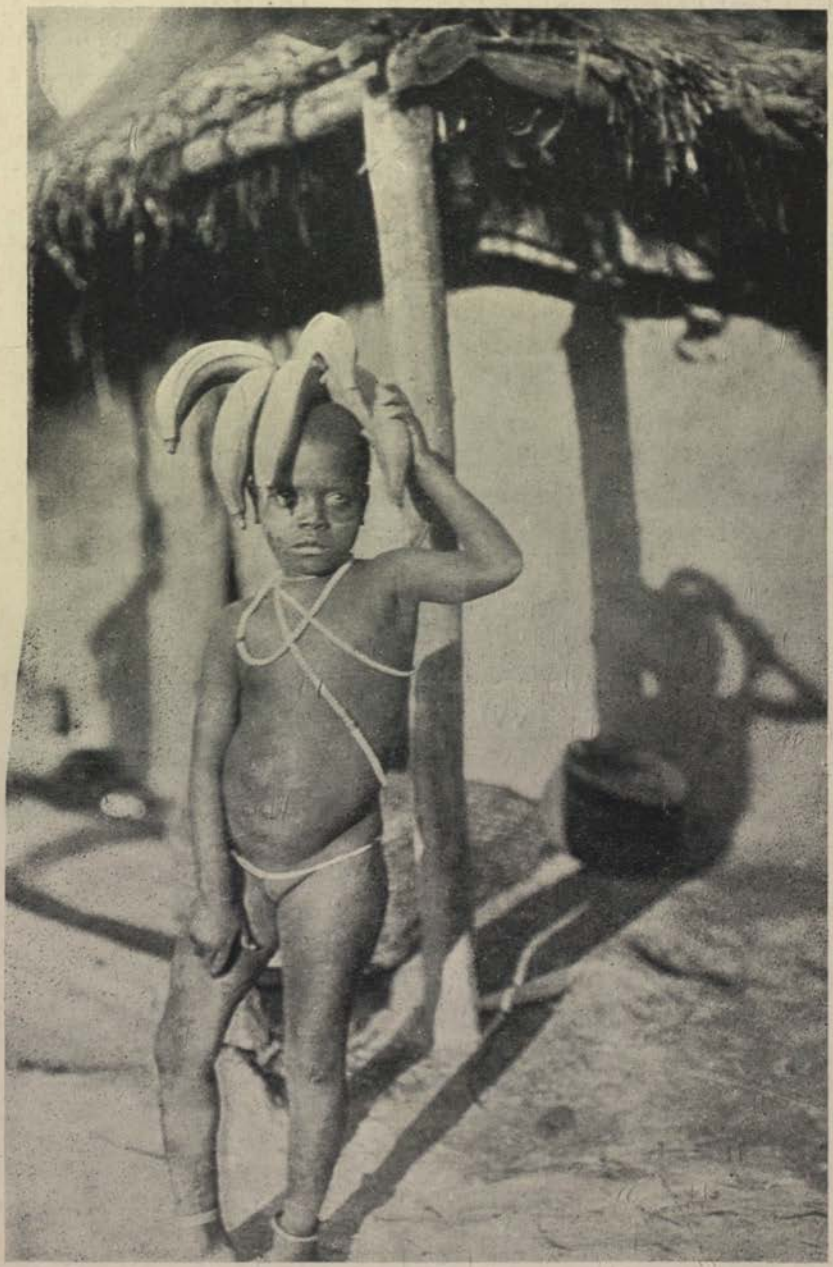
### *Some Pagan Tribes*

Two days after leaving Lame I encamped at the first Lakka town, called Pala. Here dwelt the people against whom I had been warned by the conscientious von Crailsheim and also by my followers, who upon mere hearsay lifted horrified eyebrows and said, 'Dem people chop men,' which was the delicate way in which they suggested that the Lakka were given to cannibalistic practices. If so, I am bound to say that cannibalism confers many good qualities, for the tribes with the most evil reputation for anthropophagy were

invariably those whom I found to be the most pleasant, the most peaceable and the most intelligent. The chief of Pala came out to meet me and conducted me to his compound, which was both spacious and clean, and where his numerous wives were already diligently preparing food for my retinue. My stay at Pala was in every respect a pleasant interlude. I took photos: I fetched forth my gramophone from the depths of its packing-case, and treated the Lakka to an *al fresco* concert which was mightily appreciated. I discussed ways and means, and routes and rivers, and speech and etymology with the intelligent chief. The Lakka are as vague as all other African tribes on questions of geography. They could tell me how to get to the next village or to the nearest government post; but when I asked for the stages on the way to Lau, they gave me a list of names which subsequent investigation *in situ* showed to be absolutely untrustworthy.

The Lakka are workers in iron, build their own great furnaces, prepare their own charcoal, smelt their metal, forge their weapons and utensils, and in this department need fear no comparison with the best African peoples. They are also extensive agriculturists and cattle-breeders. The chief of each village almost invariably possesses a pony, which he rides with or without saddle. Excepting the chief, who affects Mohammedan garb, the natives wear little clothing. The men don a beautifully soft antelope skin, which hangs down behind, and is used less as a covering than as a mat for sitting on. When putting on his best company manners the owner of this skin will pull the lower end of his garment forward and tuck it up between the legs. As soon as he begins to march, however, it drops to its original position. The women wear no visible clothing and but few ornaments. They content themselves with a bunch of leaves and perhaps a narrow band of beadwork about the loins. The upper and lower lips are frequently pierced and small ornaments of wood or metal inserted, but this custom does not reach such a preposterous development as among the Sarra further on.

At this stage of my route I came upon Lakka and Mundang villages alternately, so that the limits of the two peoples are not very clearly defined. But when I compared the languages spoken by each I discovered not the slightest family resemblances. This diversity of speech in the Western Sudan in



A LITTLE BANANA-SELLER

tribes which live so to speak cheek by jowl, is one of the most astonishing linguistic phenomena in Africa. The real site of Babel is to be looked for, I venture to suggest, not in the plains of the Euphrates and the Tigris, but in the valleys of the Benue and the Shari. Let me illustrate what I have said by the following table:

| *Mundang.* | *English.* | *Lakka.* |
|---|---|---|
| voño | one | knou |
| ua | two | uap |
| sai | three | hinti |
| nai | four | fudi |
| tape | five | var |
| jia | six | kaniki |
| gχemme | ten | guep |
| defu | man | sora |
| uin | woman | ma |
| uél | child | vai |
| ti | cow | kunda |
| kui | goat | ku |
| da | horse | da |
| ju | bird | lukwa |
| gwañ | chief | vutu |
| biru | tree | agu |
| ui | fire | ku (with raised tone) |
| laisuli | firewood | kupar |
| fa | grass | za |
| bi | water | bi |
| iél | river | njie |
| chume | sun | futá |
| cheo | to walk, go | tahe |
| tio | „ come | bufi |
| ginne fajiri | „ eat | kwati |
| soho | „ sleep | parié |
| chiri | „ cook | tinai |
| uró | „ get up | cherié |

Here we have twenty-eight of the most ordinary words in human speech, and we find only two that are common to both languages, and two more that show merely a slight divergence. In all other respects the vocabularies are wholly dissimilar to each other and to the Bantu speech, which is found all over Africa south of the Equator. The Mundang *nai* (four) is probably a loan word from the Bantu, and the Lakka *ma* (woman) may be onomatopoietic. The family relationship of the languages of the Sudan, to which so competent a student as Westermann is giving his attention, is one of the knottiest problems of African philology.

The Tuburi tribe lie somewhat to the north of the territory occupied by the Lakka. They occupy a fertile and well-watered country, and may fairly be described as one of the wealthiest tribes of Central Africa. Their fields supply them with plentiful harvests, the remarkable river-system of this region affords abundant opportunity for fishing, and the plains are covered with immense herds of cattle, which constitute their chief wealth. I cannot imagine any part of Africa where there is less danger of death by famine. Though a deadly disease were to decimate their herds, there would still be the well-stocked granaries to fall back on; and should an unexpected drought ravage the country, the rivers and lakes would still yield their fish. The trader in cloth finds no market for his wares among the Tuburi, wealthy though the latter are, for not a scrap of cloth do they wear. Nor do they make unto themselves coats of skins, after the manner of our first parents. The men indeed dress themselves in a piece of goatskin, like their neighbours the Lakka; but the women are satisfied with leaves and a tassel or two of beads. In their lips the fair sex furthermore pierce six holes, three above and three below, into which are inserted any metallic ornaments that come handy. There are a few circlets of beads round the neck, and anklets of metal adorn the legs.

The Tuburi, as far as my experience of them went, are a dirty people. At Tikem the hut which the chief offered me was so uninviting that I left his compound and took refuge under a tree on the outskirts of the village, and at Mafuldei things were not much better. The sight of the broad lake at Tikem, stretching away round the flank of a mountain, made the prospect of a bath seem very welcome to a man in my travel-soiled state, but when I reached the lake-shore I was repelled by the sight of a mass of dirty and discoloured water floating over a deposit of very black mud. Still, here I was with towel and soap, so in I plunged, to emerge a much cooler but a much stickier individual than I entered.

Travelling on beyond the government post at Fianga, we reached the first Bana villages on the second day. This is a very populous and most interesting tribe. Miss Olive Macleod, in her lively book *Chiefs and Cities of Central Africa*, speaks of them constantly as the Banana, but I never heard them called by any other term than the dissyllabic Bana. Their *forte* lies in agriculture. They have spread themselves over

the level plains that stretch from the Tuburi Lakes to the Logone River, and these plains they cultivate with the utmost assiduity. Round about their villages the soil has been tilled and re-tilled to such an extent that there remains hardly any pasturage for their cattle and their ponies. The soil of the country in general is a sandy loam, through which ironstone kopjes protrude, as in the case of the Adorah (or Dore) hill, which stands beside the lake at Tikem.

The Bana breed a race of sturdy ponies, on which they may be seen at all hours of the day, scouring the immense plain. They use neither bit nor bridle, but guide their little mounts with a bit of twisted bark rope that is tied round the neck and then inserted in the mouth. On examining one of these ponies at close quarters, I was shocked to see an ugly raw wound on its back just behind the shoulder-blades. That (thought I to myself) is the result of careless riding, without so much as a piece of cloth over the part which should be protected by a saddle. But presently I saw another pony, and yet another, all with open wounds, exactly in the same position. I then learnt, to my horror, that these sore backs were not due to chance carelessness, but to a settled practice, and that the Bana thus deliberately scarified their ponies in order to effectually glue the rider to his steed. It seems almost impossible that such a cruel practice can prevail among a people otherwise intelligent, and I ventured to remonstrate with the chief of Kulom.

Said I to this chief:

'Here is one of my carriers. Do you think if I took a sharp knife and made a number of gashes across his head, and then placed his load upon the bleeding surface, that he would sustain the weight more easily?'

'No,' replied the chief, 'he would not, for his head would be sick' (*i.e.* sore).

'Quite right,' said I; 'now look at your horses over yonder. You have gashed their backs, and you take care that the wound does not heal. Do you think that the horse can carry his rider the more easily for being thus cut to pieces?'

There was a burst of laughter from all who had gathered to listen to our colloquy, and the chief himself joined in the general hilarity; but no one vouchsafed an answer to my question. ''s Lands wijs, 's lands eer' (the country's custom

is the country's honour)—so runs a Dutch proverb; and I felt that I was wasting breath in appealing either to the moral sense of the community, which is undeveloped, or to its sense of kindness, which, so far as concerns dumb animals, is non-existent.

### *The Tuburi Lakes*

I cannot pass from the country of the Tuburi without some reference to the series of marshes, or rather, of what we would call in South Africa *zeekoe-gaten* (hippo-holes), which are so marked a characteristic of the surface, and form a connection between the Benue and the Shari river-systems. This chain of waterholes has received the name of the Tuburi Lakes. I visited the country in the dry season, so I can say nothing of its appearance when the rains have flooded it. Miss Macleod tells us that lilies and lotus then deck the surface of the waters, displaying many colours—white and pink and mauve and blue. 'Tall grasses invade the lakes, and the watermen, when they seek some fish-trap in their midst, throw their paddles out on to them, and then walk quickly from one paddle to the other, for the stems support the long wooden poles for a fraction of a minute. From a little distance the effect is as if they were walking on the water.'

During the dry season this series of lakes is mostly devoid of water, except for the lake at Tikem, which I have already mentioned. Marching from Tikem towards Fianga we crossed the dry bed of what must be lake during the wet season; and between Fianga and Mafuldei there was another long stretch of baked mud, which is apparently submerged when the rains are out. From the lake at Tikem flow the waters which towards the west are called the Mao Kebbi, and form one of the largest of the Benue tributaries. From the same lake, during the height of the rainy season, a channel that runs almost due north connects with the Logone, and thus with the Chad system. The Tuburi Lakes accordingly belong in common to the Niger and the Shari river systems, though it is undeniable that the bulk of their waters flow westward to the Benue. For a few weeks in the year only is this water-way between the Logone and the Benue open, nor is it wholly clear from obstacles, for between Lere and Sulkando interposes a fall, which is said to be one hundred and sixty-five

feet high. But for this obstruction one might travel from the Atlantic to Lake Chad by boat.

In these lakes is found a somewhat mysterious animal, to which passing travellers have from time to time referred. The Duke of Mecklenburg, who visited this region at the head of a scientific expedition in 1911, says in his *Vom Kongo zum Niger und Nil*: 'In this lake a most interesting animal is fairly frequently found, a mermaid or sea-cow, which the Mundang call *nebi*. It also lives in the Benue, and is likewise known on the Kamerun coast. The animal is oval in shape, and when full-grown attains the length of possibly three meters (nearly ten feet). Its hide is as thick as that of a hippo, and the lake-dwellers cut switches from it. Native hunters kill the *nebi* with a harpoon, and one of them prided himself on having slain more than a hundred in this manner. My own attempts, armed with a rifle, to get within range of the shallow water which the animal favours, were a failure; though this method of hunting is the only one which promises any result to the European. In calm weather when the lake was smooth, I often saw at a distance the heads of these interesting animals, showing above water for a second or two, and I heard their remarkable cries. Another day I followed at a distance the course of a hunter in his boat. Soundlessly he drove his little canoe hither and thither, searching for his prey. Suddenly he wheeled round; he had, no doubt, seen an animal and was pursuing it. For half an hour he coursed backwards and forwards. Finally he seemed to be quite close. His paddle barely touched the water, and then was withdrawn. The right hand grasped the harpoon, the man slowly raised himself, flexed his arm with the greatest care, cast his weapon and—missed. Presently the same thing recurred, so that this style of hunting appears to be somewhat problematical. Before I left I offered a big reward to any one who could kill one of these animals, but that was the last I heard of the matter.'

The earliest traveller, so far as I know, who makes any reference to this creature as present in the waters of the Benue system is Barth, who as early at 1851 wrote: 'The most singular animal seems to be the *ayu*, which lives in the river, and in some respect resembles the seal. It comes out of the river at nights, and feeds on the fresh grass growing on the banks. Mr. Vogel, who has succeeded in obtaining sight of

the animal, found that it is a mammal like the *manatus senegalensis.*' There is no doubt that Dr. Barth was right. The *manatee* is certainly a very curious animal, allied to the whale on the one hand and the seal on the other. Three species are known: one inhabits the waters of Florida and Central America, another is found in the Amazon, and the third is the species described above.

### *Animal Life*

While speaking of animals I must make some mention of the great variety of birds to be found in the vicinity of the Tikem lake. Wherever fish is abundant, one would naturally expect to find aquatic birds in large numbers. And around the Tuburi Lakes the flights of birds are literally countless. On the evening of the day when I had my dip in the turbid lake, I witnessed a beautiful sight. In the midst of the village where I lay encamped stood a gigantic spreading tree, which was evidently a favourite roosting-place for the birds from the lake. At sunset they began to arrive, first by twos and threes, but soon in larger flocks of eight and ten at a time. They took possession of branch after branch, in their tens and their scores and their hundreds—herons, egrets, ibises, storks—until every available inch of room was occupied, and the birds covered the tree like a pall of snow.

In the vicinity of the Tuburi Lakes I also saw, in broad daylight, a number of bats circling round a tree. They were a large species, quite twelve or fifteen inches in stretch of wing, and belong, I suppose, to the fruit-eating variety. I was unable to secure a specimen, so I cannot to my regret give more detailed information of this creature.

The game of the country aroused greater interest in my breast. From time to time we came across the tracks of elephant, but they are not very abundant, the country being too thickly populated. The hippopotamus abounds in the rivers and *zeekoe-gaten.* According to some travellers the rhinoceros is frequently found in the scrub, but I did not meet with any signs of this animal until we had crossed the Logone into French territory. Coming to antelopes, I have already mentioned the Western hartebeest and the *gazella rufifrons,* an animal resembling the springbuck, but of smaller size. At Charo I came across a herd of waterbuck, of which

I secured a specimen at a later stage of the journey. They are the sing-sing waterbuck (*cobus defassa unctuosus*) without the distinctive white circle round the buttocks, which distinguishes the South African variety. The horns of the one I shot were only twenty-five and a half inches long and seventeen and a half inches from tip to tip. When among the Lakka I shot an oribi, which had a reddish-brown colour and a white belly. The horns were four inches in length, annulated at the base, and with the tips bent slightly inwards. The length of the skull was seven inches, the muzzle was hairy, with large glands below the eyes. Of game birds I saw guinea-fowl frequently. This bird is more widely spread than any other game bird in Africa, and so often fills the pot that it must be looked upon as in a very special sense the traveller's stand-by. At one of the Mundang villages I managed to secure a game bird belonging to the *otis* (bustard) family. Its head, back and wings were black, interspersed with white streaks, while the breast was white, and the neck reddish white. The weight of the bird was fifteen pounds, and I could only get near enough to shoot it with the rifle.

### *What the Country Needs*

To sum up my impressions of the region lying around the Tuburi Lakes, I must say at once that it is one of the most densely populated parts of Africa. When I descended from the slight elevation upon which the government post of Fianga is situated, and cast my eyes over the plain eastwards, I saw the smoke of countless villages. A few days further, as I stood in the Bana village of Chere, from which there was a fairly unobstructed view all around, I counted not less than a hundred villages within a radius of three miles, each of which must have held at least a hundred inhabitants, small and great. This would give a population of 10,000 in a circle with a diameter of six miles. The four tribes of this territory are not only exceedingly populous, but also industrious and intelligent to a degree not often seen in Africa. I have referred to the houses and granaries of the Mundang, the smelting furnaces and forges of the Lakka, the cattle of the Tuburi, and the ponies and cultivated fields of the Bana. These peoples are self-contained: they are able to supply their own needs. They ask nothing of European civilisation,

thankful though they are that settled government prevails, and that slave-raiding is a thing of the past. They have no use for the prints and cloth goods which the trader seeks to introduce, for they belong to 'the great unclothed.' They do not want European implements and utensils, for their inbred conservatism makes them believe that their own are as good—and better. They have no call to lead the strenuous life, since nature is lavish, hunger uncommon, poverty unknown, and trade competition inconceivable. I do not think that it is our duty to force them to look at life from our point of view. Why should we try to infect them with our feverish impatience, and teach them that life is not life unless they learn to hurry and worry, to bustle and hustle, as we enlightened Westerns do? Of course we should find their fashion of life unutterably dull, but why should we assume that it is unutterably dull to them? They like it: it is suited to their present stage of evolution: then let us leave them as they are.

All they need is the Gospel. For that they are waiting, as it were with uplifted heads and outstretched arms. Mohammedanism stands ready to swallow them up. Mohammedan emissaries are now knocking at the doors of these nations, hitherto inaccessible, but now open to trade, commerce, and religion. They are nations that are well worth winning. Christianised, they would act as a powerful bulwark to stay the spreading wave of Mohammedanism: Moslemised, they would impart greater impetus to that wave. The Church of Christ to-day stands before a piercing call to action, a solemn duty to act decisively and immediately, and a grave responsibility if she evade or postpone action.

# CHAPTER IX

## IN THE FRENCH SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

He never knew
The meaning of the broad Karoo,
The bush, the dusty loam,
Nor why uprose to nightly view
Strange stars amid the gloam.

THOMAS HARDY.

### *A Storm on the Prairie*

IT was the 30th May when our caravan crossed the Logone and entered Lai. The journey from Lame, approximately one hundred and eighty-five miles distant, took us thirteen days. The premonitory thunderstorms that herald the approach of the rainy season were already upon us, and just before our arrival we had our first taste of a wetting. The country that lies immediately to the west of the Logone consists of illimitable grass prairies. In the dim distance the wayfarer sees a clump of trees, clearly defined against the far-off horizon. It denotes the position of the village for which he is making. An hour passes, two hours pass, and he seems to be as far as ever from his objective. At the lapse of three hours' good marching he eventually reaches a dirty native town, sits down in the shade of a leafy tree, and begs for water. These immense plains are perfectly level. Nowhere does one see the slightest depression, and I can very well understand that my French map marked this whole tract as 'impracticable aux hautes eaux.' The country shows so little slope that the waters have no inducement to flow to the west rather than to the east, to the north rather than to the south, nor is there any channel through which they could find a way.

On the morning of the 30th May we made a late start. There was the usual discouraging experience with carriers, whom I had to cajole and flatter and bribe and threaten into shouldering their respective loads. Meanwhile the heavens,

that wait not for recalcitrant porters, were showing dark and ominous in the east. At length fairly on the march, I looked up apprehensively at the darkening sky, hoping the best but fearing the worst. My hopes were soon dispelled and my fears justified. Nearer and nearer drew the storm. We were now in the midst of the prairie, and I glanced around for shelter. There was not a hut, not a tree, not a shrub visible over all the broad expanse. My carriers were widely scattered, more than half a mile separating the foremost and hindmost. I urged Polyphemus into a gallop, and riding forward made the vanguard halt. Near the pathway grew a few stunted palms not more than four feet high, sending down their roots into an ant-hill. Here I directed my men to deposit their loads, from one of which I drew a small piece of canvas, nine feet square, which I had presciently provided for occasions like the present. In a moment I had the canvas over my boxes, while I crept under a corner. My carriers, however, considered that they had as much right to shelter as their loads, and they crowded under the improvised tent, from which I had not the heart to dislodge them. Now a nine-foot canvas cannot by any possibility cover twenty-five men and as many packages, so that many had to be satisfied with getting a head, an arm, a nose or an ear under shelter, with the rest of the body forming a gutter for the descending flood. The atmosphere under the canvas, where a variety of odours arising from perspiration, pomades, and semi-putrid meat assailed the nostrils, may be better imagined than described. The rain meanwhile descended and the floods came. The keen wind, which always accompanies these tropical storms, beat upon us first from one quarter and then from the other. The roar of the thunder and the flashes of lightning were incessant. The water flowed from the canvas in steady streams, travelled down the backs of the carriers who had the misfortune to be stationed at the circumference of our little circle, and sank into the sandy soil. For full two and a half hours we sat, wet and cramped, under that bit of canvas, until the blackest of the clouds had rolled by, the rain had abated to a gentle drizzle, and we were able to proceed.

I now obtained some idea of the appearance of these plains when the rains have set in. They were truly ‘ impracticable.’ The surface was covered with miniature lakes. The roadway was submerged for long distances, and wherever it was not

absolutely submerged it was as slippery as moist soap. At intervals which were much too frequent for comfort large holes showed themselves in our path, into which it was easy to fall. My pony trod into one of them, which probably lay on his blind side, and instantly fell flat to the ground with his feet in the air. His master, happily, was walking before him at the time, or he must have been involved in the catastrophe. Never shall I forget the struggle to reach Lai over this treacherous track. The strongest and best of the carriers took four hours to cover eight miles, and the weaker men were two hours longer on the road. When afternoon arrived the sun broke through the clouds and illuminated the great gleaming plain. It was a fine sight. We reached the banks of the Logone without further incident, crossed it without disaster, though the swift water was well over the flaps of my saddle, and scrambled up the east bank on to French soil. M. Richard, the temporary administrator, showed me exceptional kindness, assigned me roomy quarters in a half-finished house, and found me the necessary men for my further travels to Fort Archambault.

Greatly as I hate to be hurried and greatly as I hate to hurry others (unless they be African porters), I am reluctantly compelled to ask my readers to accelerate their pace from this stage. Unless we can contrive to travel faster, we shall find ourselves (if still alive) at some remote point in the very heart of the continent, when the limits sternly set by the publishers of this volume have been reached. Now I would be loath to have to ring down the curtain finally when we have only reached the end of the third act, so I propose to omit minor incidents and curtail the play. I have no doubt that those of my readers who have endured the sweat and toil of travel up to this point will gratefully endorse my decision.

### *The Shari-Chad Region*

At Lai we enter French territory. When the European powers discovered in the eighties of last century, that Africa was not all desert but that a considerable moiety of the continent consisted of reproductive land, France took a hand in the game of scramble that ensued; with the practical result that the tricolour waves to-day over some four million square miles of the surface. From Algiers in the north to the Ivory

Coast and the Congo, and from Cape Verde in the west to the distant borders of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, one travels constantly in the French sphere of influence. The territory owned by the Gallic republic in Africa is greater far than that of any other European power; nearly twice as extensive, indeed, as the possessions of Great Britain, who is the next largest shareholder. On the other hand, it must be admitted that France possesses some of the most sterile portions of the continent, since the waterless wastes of the Sahara fall mainly to its share. The *Territoire Militaire Ubangi-Shari-Chad* through which I journeyed is administered from certain 'postes' lying at intervals of one to two hundred miles from each other. These military posts are occupied as a rule by a lieutenant or a sergeant, who is expected to exercise control and maintain law and order over twenty thousand or thirty thousand square miles of country. This he succeeds in doing, with the aid of a couple of score of half-trained native soldiers; which surely argues either that the administration is very tactful, or that the natives are very tractable, or that an equal meed of praise is due to the governing and the governed. Naturally the French Government has had its share of trials in occupying and settling the country, and has been engaged in not a few of those 'little wars' which are the price of colonisation everywhere. At Lai I made the acquaintance of the former king of Wadai, who a few years back rose in rebellion against the administration, was defeated and captured, and is spending the remainder of his days as the protégé and pensioner of the Government against which he rebelled. Again, a few months previous to my arrival in the country an expedition had been dispatched to Tibesti, in the very heart of the Sahara, several weeks' march north-eastward from Lake Chad, with the object of punishing a chief of the powerful Senussi Moslems; and this punitive expedition (according to official reports) was completely successful. Facts like these go to prove that the French Government, though in peaceful occupation of the bulk of its territory, has still to deal with several tribes and clans which refuse to be brought under its yoke.

Lake Chad, on the testimony of various travellers, seems to be subject to a gradual shrinkage, though Boyd Alexander thinks that it is less marked than has generally been supposed. It is said, and I do not think that the statement has been

contradicted, that a town which in 1850 was situated on the southern margin of the lake is now twenty miles away from the water's edge. This can hardly be due solely to the growth of the delta at the mouth of the Shari, and there seems little reason to doubt that Chad is no exception to the progressive desiccation which is apparent in all parts of the African continent. To one who like myself has seen the immense volume of water borne down to the lake by the Logone and Shari rivers, it seems incredible that Chad is really drying up. I have already explained that the Logone at Lai, at the end of the dry season, contained enough water to make wading across it a matter demanding care and circumspection. The stream was one hundred yards broad and between four and five feet deep. Remembering then that the river was practically empty, and that I forded it two hundred miles above its confluence with the Shari, it will be agreed that the amount of water which finds its way to Chad through this channel is not inconsiderable. Not far from Fort Archambault we crossed the Sarra, a tributary of the Shari, and here we found the stream no longer to the loins only, but ' waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over.' Then presently we reached the Shari itself, a great highway of commerce, one of the mighty arteries of Africa, dispensing life and fertility all along its course of fourteen hundred miles, and bearing down to Lake Chad a flood of waters so great that an immense alluvial delta is being deposited at its mouth. But in spite of this almost incalculable supply, the loss by evaporation and percolation is greater than the water which the lake receives. The Shari-Chad hydrographical system is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable features of the continent.

Let me sum up in a few lines my impression of the aspect of the country between the Logone and the Shari. First of all, it is as flat as can be. Since leaving Garua I had seen no mountains, and this perfect evenness of the superficies continued until we had left Fort Archambault far behind on the southward journey. No only is the country as level as the proverbial billiard-table, but, strangest of all, we never passed a stream, a hollow or a depression of any kind, excepting only the great rivers mentioned above. One wonders where the rain-water flows to, and by what channels it is conveyed to the rivulets and rivers which drain into Lake Chad. I can well understand that the bulk of the water sinks

into the porous soil, but a goodly portion must by some means find its way to the great river-channels, else these could not display the volume which they carry.

The Logone-Shari district is better wooded than the lands lying to the west of the former river. Such at least is the impression left on the passing traveller. It may well be that the country is not really more forest-covered but only less populous, and that consequently the virgin woods have been less rigorously thinned out by the hand of man. At any rate, we journeyed day after day through never-ending forest, the broad highway forming long vistas of green branches and dappled road, that extended at times to the very horizon. At the end of six or eight miles there would be a break in the verdant wall, and a clearing would become visible, with great tree-trunks lying prone in all directions, some just felled, some already stripped of their branches, and some sending up a column of pale smoke and turning rapidly to ashes. Then you caught sight of twenty or thirty huts, surrounded by green fields and adorned with fine spreading trees, under which two or three men are busy weaving mats, and a handful of women stand gossiping at the mortar. Mangy yellow curs prowl about in search of a bone, fat goats and placid sheep recline in the shadow of the eaves, gaping children peer out of dark doorways, and keen-eyed hawks circle overhead, ready to snatch a bit of offal from the dunghill or a chicken from the brood. There is a large tree in the middle of the village, the open space beneath which is kept scrupulously clean. Here my porters lay down their burdens and demand water and food of the inhabitants in exchange for salt or meat. You unpack your hamper, get a cup of tea prepared, and enjoy a light repast. Then the loads are repacked, you summon your foraging carriers by voice and whistle, and the march is resumed. Thus day succeeds to day. Two questions obsess you every morning—Is it a long march to-day? and, Are there villages and is there water along the route? Yes and No respectively in answer to these questions plunges you into the depths of despair; but No and Yes raises you to the heights of cheerfulness.

Happily it is not all forest in the Logone-Shari region. There are times when you emerge into what our Teutonic friends have agreed to call *Parklandschaft*, that is to say, open grass country dotted at intervals with single trees or clumps

of trees. Such bits of scenery form a pleasant relief from the monotony of the unending forest, and this *Parklandschaft* has the additional attraction of being the haunt of various kinds of big game. For the first time on my journey I reached a part of Africa which could be called, without exaggeration, a 'sportsman's paradise.' There was no need here to go tramping about for game the whole of a hot afternoon, unrewarded by so much as a glimpse of fleeing antelopes. The game was visible from the road, it was abundant, it was not unreasonably shy, and the style of country afforded excellent cover. Under such conditions the most lukewarm hunter will be fired to enthusiasm. I make no boast of being a sportsman: I am nothing but a missionary traveller. I have never to my knowledge created or broken a record, nor have I the slightest ambition to do so. But both for my own sake and for the sake of my followers I shot antelopes when I had the opportunity, believing that fresh meat is superior to tinned meat, and game preferable to fowl. I am in favour of hunting—in moderation. The meat is pleasant to the palate, the exercise is beneficial for the body, and the excitement is stimulating for the mind. But when hunting is overdone the results are respectively waste, weariness and insomnia—food run to waste, exercise turned to weariness, and excitement issuing in sleeplessness. Here too the apostolic precept applies, 'Let your moderation be known unto all men.'

Between Lai and Fort Archambault there are to be found elephant, rhinoceros, roan, hartebeest, cob, duiker and oribi, besides other species which I did not come across. On two occasions I sighted roan in the distance, went after them, and did not return empty-handed. In my experience the roan antelope (*hippotragus equinus*) is one of the most widely spread of game animals in Africa. You find the roan in Nigeria, in the Shari-Chad region, in Uganda, in British East Africa, in Katanga, in Rhodesia, and in Nyasaland. It is also to be found, according to the authorities, in portions of the continent unvisited by me—in Senegambia, in Somaliland, and in Angola. Hardly another of the big-game animals has as wide a range. The roan is a roamer indeed. Seven specimens of this antelope fell to my rifle on the way between the Logone and the Shari, but the horns were disappointingly small, the best being twenty-seven inches in length. For so large an animal it carries very insignificant horns. From time to

time along the road or in the hunting-field we saw the tracks of lions, but they kept well out of sight, and valour lacked the opportunity to reveal itself.

It must not be supposed that the huntsman has merely to walk into the bush in order to find game in plenty. The occasions on which I drew blank were infinitely more numerous than those on which I secured something for the pot. I suppose that even the most fortunate hunter has experiences like these: on the first day he wanders about for two or three hours without seeing anything at all; the next day he sees game, but he only sees it vanish in the distance without giving him a chance to even get within range; the third day he comes up with the game and gets his chance, but misses; the fourth day he gets his chance again and hits, but not in a mortal spot, and after a hot and breathless pursuit for three or four miles, he is forced by the approach of darkness to relinquish the chase; on the sixth day, with luck, he clears the obstructing hurdles of days one to five, and secures his prize. I calculate that by the time I had shot ten head of game I had walked quite fifty miles in the hunting-field.

### *Medical Work*

In these regions there was a constant drain upon the slender medical knowledge which I possessed. At almost every village men, women, and children gathered about the white medicine-man. Ulcers and eyes were what they commonly brought me—two of the most intractable of African ailments. What can a man do for such disorders, though endowed with all the qualifications of the whole College of Physicians, when he only sojourns for a night? And yet these poor people placed the most implicit faith in my charms. The white man is a magician—this is the only conception that enters their minds—a marvellous magician, and if he fails, it is only because he has not chosen to make his charms powerful enough. But as for his assertion that the trouble is beyond his ability to cure—nonsense! And so you address yourself despairingly to the task of cleaning and powdering an ulcer of six months' growth, or of dropping a little boracic acid into an eye that has lost its sight and requires a lancet instead of a lotion.

One afternoon the concourse of patients was beyond anything I had yet experienced. For three hours I was unin-

NATIVES DANCING ON BASTILLE DAY (FORT DE POSSEL)

THATCHING A MISSION HOUSE (SALATU, NORTHERN NIGERIA)

terruptedly busy, and treated thirty-three patients in all. Then darkness fell, and I closed my medicine chest and made it plain to the multitude that still lay around that I could do no more that day. Next morning early I was compelled to resume the march. Unknown to me five prospective patients followed me to the next camping-place. As soon as I had taken my seat under a spreading tree, they silently presented themselves—a pathetic spectacle. I bound up their wounds, pouring in the modern substitutes for the good Samaritan's oil and wine, and sent them home psychologically satisfied if not physiologically relieved. Next day the same thing occurred, but I was on the look-out, and discovered at our half-way halt that more of the lame and the blind were following my trail; so I unlocked the drug-case, doctored the sick, regaled the infants on sugar, and sent every one on his homeward way rejoicing.

In the lands of the Western Sudan there is a magnificent opening and a great future for medical missions. In all Africa I have met with few tribes that are as responsive to medical treatment as those living in these regions. There is no need at this time of day to enter a plea for the medical missionary. He holds a secure place in the scheme of Christian missions. When we think of the immense value of this form of missionary activity in removing prejudice, allaying suspicion, alleviating suffering, and throwing open doors which otherwise must have remained sealed; when we think of the unequalled opportunities which medical missions create for active evangelistic effort; and when we remember that they breathe the spirit and perpetuate the methods of the Master, who 'went about doing good and healing all manner of sickness and disease,' we cannot but desiderate for them a larger place in the heart and the prayers of Christians generally, and a larger place in the enterprise which designs to reach forth unto the regions beyond.

### *Fort Archambault, as Goal and Starting-point*

We marched into Fort Archambault on the 12th June 1914. Shortly before arriving we were held up by an arm of the Shari, broad enough and deep enough to necessitate the employment of a canoe. On such occasions there was always a considerable delay. Loads have to be carefully laid in the

little ferry-boat, and only three or four men, with loads, can be conveyed at a time. The pony has to be unsaddled and forced into the stream, to swim alongside the canoe. When we reach the other side the men suddenly discover that they would like a bath, and more delay ensues. Finally we get going, and I consult my watch, to find that we have spent two golden hours at this ferry. However, it is but one and a half miles further, across a level, cultivated plain, and we reach our goal. The town is regularly laid out, in rectangular fashion, with broad streets. On the river bank lies the European quarter, where there are half a dozen red-brick, red-tiled buildings, the dwelling-houses and offices of the staff of officials. I hunted high and low for a harbourage, and the local agent of the 'Compagnie de l'Ouhame et de la Nana' at length took pity on me and offered me a room in the Company's store. This room I found to be occupied with ants below and bats above, while the doorway was in the last stages of dissolution, owing to termite ravages; but to me it was palatial accommodation, since it possessed a brick floor, which I had not felt beneath my feet for months.

The Shari at Fort Archambault is about two hundred yards broad, and flows gently between grassy, wooded banks, whose height above water-level, at this season of the year, varies from four to ten feet. The scenery is decidedly pretty, though lacking a background, for hills and mountains, as I explained above, are conspicuous by their absence. Compared with the crowded Benue, the river is pretty well lifeless. A few canoes cross and recross the river, conveying passengers to the village yonder on the east side; but of traffic up and down the stream I saw but little. Another point of contrast with the Benue is the paucity of birds. Unlike the western river, the Shari does not abound in fish, and hence the absence of aquatic bird-life. Of game there is a sufficient variety. I found cob and bushbuck a little lower down stream on the opposite bank, and previous travellers like Savage Landor and Boyd Alexander tell of the presence of elephant, rhinoceros, buffalo, hartebeest, duiker, and warthog.

Fort Archambault is one of the most important administrative centres in French Equatorial Africa. The natives know it far and wide as *Fransambo*, a corruption of 'Fort Archambo' with a touch of 'France' thrown in. It is a point from which radiate many roads to east and west and north

and south. Though the old fort has disappeared the town still faces eastwards, like a sentinel guarding the approach, to the populous western lands, of the tribes that roam the vast spaces of the eastern Sudanese deserts. The wholesale trade of Fort Archambault is almost a monopoly in the hands of the 'Compagnie de l'Ouhame et de la Nana,' but Hausa and Fulani traders do a flourishing retail business. Mohammedan pilgrims are equipped here for the long and trying overland march to Khartum. These pilgrims are very eager to attach themselves, if they may, to an expedition that is conducted by a European. In this way only can they feel secure against the exorbitant demands of the rapacious chiefs who live along the Mecca caravan trail.

I had a small experience which illustrates this. For some days before reaching Fort Archambault I noticed a Hausa of quiet, unostentatious demeanour following my string of porters, marching when they marched, halting when they halted, sleeping where they spent the night. I wondered faintly where he was bound for, but never interrogated him on the matter. At Fort Archambault he approached me with one of my carriers as intermediary. The sum of his petition was, might he attach himself to me permanently? He would eat his own food, pay his own way, and cause me no trouble of any nature. All he asked for was, permission to journey with me.

'But, my good man,' I remonstrated, 'you don't know where I am going to. What object have you in just travelling with me?'

'I want to go just where the white mallam (teacher) goes.'

'But I am going to take to the river, and I intend travelling in *that* direction,' I said, pointing to the south.

'Yes,' said the Hausa, 'I want to go there too.'

'Well, but what is the name of the place you are really bound for?'

'Mecca,' answered the Mohammedan.

'I am afraid,' said I, 'that you will never arrive at Mecca if you go with me, for my journey lies in quite another direction.'

It took a good deal of argumentation to convince my Moslem friend of the sincerity of my answers, but at length he took his departure, an acquiescent, but sadly disappointed man.

The word *Mecca*, however, gave me food for furious thought.

Mecca is the magnet which draws Moslems from the remotest corners of the African continent. Mecca acts as a centralising and consolidating influence upon Mohammedans in every country. It is the holy citadel of Islam, to which only believers in the prophet are admitted. And those who have performed the final act of Moslem obedience and have visited the sacred place, attain at one bound to the heights of Mohammedan sainthood. The founder of Islam, when he enjoined upon every one of his followers a pilgrimage, once in his life, to the sacred city, revealed an intimate knowledge of the vein of heroism that lies hidden in every human heart. 'This do, and thou shalt live' has always appealed more powerfully to the heart than 'Believe, and thou shalt be saved.' Tell a man, '*Do* this, and live,' and if he has any trace of enthusiasm or any tincture of earnestness he will leap at the opportunity. Tell him, 'Only *believe*,' and you make a demand upon his spiritual instincts and his moral strenuousness with which he finds it inconceivably difficult to comply. Islam is a religion of ceremonial performance, and such a religion has always been the desideratum of the human heart.

# CHAPTER X

## FROM THE SHARI TO THE UBANGI

And methought that beauty and terror are only one, not two :
And the world has room for love, and death, and thunder, and dew ;
And all the sinews of hell slumber in summer air ;
And the face of God is a rock, but the face of the rock is fair.
Beneficent streams of tears flow at the finger of pain ;
And out of the cloud that smites, beneficent rivers of rain.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### *The Route*

BETWEEN Fort Archambault and Fort de Possel, on the Ubangi River, stretches a chain of French forts, which indicate the route followed by the forces of law and order in the effort to establish their authority in the far interior. Commencing from the south we have Fort de Possel on the Ubangi, Fort Sibut on the Tomi, Fort Crampel on the Gribangi, and Forts Archambault, Bretonnet, and Lamy on the Shari. From the last-named post, which lies some distance to the south of Lake Chad, it is a journey of nearly two months to Ain Galaka, where in November 1913 the final skirmish took place which ended in the defeat of the Senussi Arabs. These remote oases in the depths of the Sahara desert cannot be reached from the north. The illimitable and inhospitable desert, foodless, waterless, shelterless, is a barrier as insurmountable as the ice and snow which guard the Arctic and Antarctic poles. The stream of French authority must accordingly flow by way of Matadi, at the mouth of the Congo, up the Congo and Ubangi rivers, and then *via* the chain of forts just mentioned to its 'Ultima Thule' in the Sahara. Five months is the time required to travel from Paris to Ain Galaka ; and this will suggest the immense difficulties with which the Republic has to contend in occupying and administrating its distant possessions.

Along the route just described there is a continual flow of officials in both directions. The 'Compagnie de l'Ouhame

et de la Nana' has the monopoly of the river transit, and is contractor to the Government, whose officers always take precedence. At Fort Archambault, accordingly, I had to wait five days for a barge, and enjoyed the additional privilege of paying for my passage just double what the French official pays for his. Glad enough to make progress on any terms, I embarked with my two personal boys, after taking an affecting farewell of my Hausa carrriers, who had travelled with me from Garua, Yola, and Lau. Impelled by eight muscular polers, we covered the two hundred and twenty-five miles between Fort Archambault and Fort Crampel in twelve days. Making headway against the current, hauling the barge through swift rapids and poling uninterruptedly from dawn to dark, cast a pretty heavy strain upon the men, but as I was able to keep them in meat, their cheerfulness and good-humour remained unimpaired.

We passed hardly a single village in all this two hundred and twenty-five mile course. I cannot imagine where the people have gone to, unless they have fled to the bush in order to escape the too persistent attentions of a paternal Government, that insists upon demonstrating the ennobling and elevating influence of labour. Along this route, with its constant stream of travellers, there is a corresponding demand for carriers, polers, roadmakers, servants, and soldiers; and as the native prefers his own easy and unruffled existence to the turmoil of life in European communities, he quietly withdraws into the inaccessible forest, and dwells remote from the great highways of travel and traffic. We are face to face, once again, with the conflict between the African and the European ideals.

### *A Thunderstorm at Midnight*

During our journey southward from Fort Archambault the rainy season, which had already given hints of its near approach, began determinedly to set in. On one occasion, which I shall not easily forget, we tied up at sundown, according to custom, on a sandbank. Fires were soon burning, kettles boiling, and delightsome odours arising from utensils of various shapes and sizes. Supper duly discussed, I directed that my bed and mosquito-net should be set up on the clean and level sand. It was a beautiful moonless night; the stars glowed and glittered with incomparable magnificence. Sirius

lay low on the western horizon; the Plough stretched across the northern sky; and through the intervening tree-tops I tried to catch a glimpse of the Cross that indicated the position of my southern home. There was nothing to suggest that Nature was in any other than a placid, peaceful mood. I retired to bed in happy though pensive frame of mind. For two hours I slept the sleep of the just, and then suddenly I was broad awake. What was that? Surely not a thunder-clap! Yes, the sky was overclouded, the light of the blinking stars was quenched, and, as if to dispel my last doubt, another burst of thunder succeeded to the first. 'Suli, run,' I shouted to my boy. Between us we struggled in the dark to undo the mosquito-curtain and fold the bed, it being my intention to flee to the boat for shelter. But the storm was already upon us. The downpour was truly tropical in its fierceness. There were no premonitory drops, and the rain came down straightway in sheets. Within thirty seconds every thread of clothing and bedding was drenched. A bitter wind, blowing first from the east, then from the south, then from the west, accompanied the driving rain. In two minutes I was chilled to the bone and my teeth were chattering. The lightning-flashes were incessant, and lit up the weird scene as with the glare of noonday. I saw the dark forms of my followers crouching over the ashes of flooded fires, I distinguished the outline of our boat still moored to the bank, and wondered whether her anchor would hold against the rush of the waters; I discerned pools of rain-water all around me, where there had been only firm dry sand, and trusted that the river would not rise and completely flood us as we lay thus precariously on a low peninsula of reed and sand. The overwhelming bursts of thunder sounded to my confused senses like the veritable crack of doom. Would we survive this calamity? Could I, even at the best, hope to escape a severe attack of malaria, or a crippling onset of rheumatism?

In less than twenty minutes the fury of the storm was spent. Ten minutes more and the last drops had fallen, the rain ceasing almost as suddenly as it had commenced. In an hour's time a few stars peeped timidly through little rifts between dark and lowering cloud-shapes. I rose from my crouching position and stretched my stiffened limbs. The men meanwhile were coaxing the dead fires back to life, and in spite of sodden wood they were presently all blazing cheer-

fully. I proceeded to investigate the damage. Our barge was half full of water; all my goods were soaking; some books, which had been insecurely packed, had suffered grievously, though not irremediably; guns and ammunition were safe and dry. So far good. But my garments, day clothes as well as night clothes, and all my bed-coverings, were dripping water from every tip and tassel. I spent the next two hours before a log fire, trying to get two necessary garments partially dry; then I selected the driest of the blankets, and prepared a moist and uncomfortable bed in my folding-chair. But of sleep I enjoyed little more that night. My deck-chair cramped me; my damp bed repelled me; my enemies, the mosquitoes, plagued me. I was glad when rosy dawn arrived and ended my discomfort.

The next day was one of brilliant sunshine. At 9 A.M., after we had poled along for more than three hours, a suitable spot offered, and I directed our *capita* to moor the boat and get all my wet goods ashore. Then the damp articles were exposed to the generous warmth of a tropical sun, and subjected to a process of thorough desiccation. In the meantime I had partaken of my morning meal, and then gone forth beyond the belt of forest that girdles both banks of the river, to the open grassy plain beyond. There I discovered a young ram of the *cob* species taking his morning siesta. Him I brought down with a shot through the hind quarters, and so re-stocked our larder. The genial warmth, the suitable and abundant food, and the excitement of the chase may have succeeded in dislodging the germs of malaria and rheumatics from my system, or they may have been required to expel them from the imagination only; but certain it is that no evil effects followed my exposure to the fury of the elements on that memorable June night.

### *Tsetse and Sleep-sickness*

One of the French officers whom I met warned me betimes against the tsetse-fly. 'When you get to the Gribangi,' he said, 'you will know all about the tsetse'; and he nodded his head in significant and alarming fashion. It was perfectly true; they were a terror on that river. So long as the stream is broad and the banks devoid of superabundant forest, the fly is absent. But when the river narrows down, as it does in

its upper reaches, to a breadth of fifty or sixty yards, and the shores are thickly girt with heavy and continuous forest, then the tsetse become a veritable plague, and a menace not merely to comfort but to health. Of all the pests which make life miserable in the tropics, I know of none that is so cunning and so treacherous as the tsetse. You may see an occasional fly flit past, but you never observe its approach, nor feel it settle on hand, arm, or neck. It stalks you as carefully as you stalk the game on yonder plains. Invisibly, insensibly, unexpectedly, it alights on your skin, and then drives its poisoned barb deep into your flesh. You feel a sharp prick like a needle's, which first burns furiously and then settles into a steady itch. You know that a tsetse has bitten you, but you have never seen the creature. It attacks you on any exposed part of the body, to which you do not or cannot for the moment direct your attention. The naked polers are most frequently assailed on back and shoulder, or at the rear part of the leg. I myself was mostly bitten in the neck, through the sock, or on the hands, when these were folded and I sat with thoughts far away. The attack was always an underhand one. The tsetse is lost to all sense of honour. In stealth, cunning, and pure malice it easily outdistances all competitors. My tour on the Gribangi was one of the most unpleasant and uncomfortable in the whole range of my experience, and for this the tsetse is responsible. In the early morning at seven these pests began their activities for the day, and they did not cease operations until the sun had disappeared. All day long I was obliged to be on the alert, armed with a switch or a towel, to ward off their crafty attacks. There was no thought of reading or writing in quiet comfort, much less of dozing off contentedly to the regular swish of the poles in the water. All my wits were concentrated on the problem of defending myself against these determined and unscrupulous foes.

The happiest hour of the day arrives at half-past six or seven. We are moored up to the bank. Mighty branches overhang our bark. Among the trees a fire has been kindled. My tent is pitched. Suli is arranging my bed, and Kuku is stooping over a saucepan from which arise appetising odours. I sit silent and content in my chair. It is the hour

> 'When tsetse cease from troubling,
> And bluebottles are at rest.'

There is nothing to disturb my equanimity. My boatmen have worked well to-day, and are happy over their flesh-pots. As for myself, I have food in abundance, for which the uttermost parts of the earth have been laid under contribution. Here are tea from China and canned fruit from California; fish from Norway and preserve from the Cape; butter from Denmark and coffee from Brazil; milk from Switzerland and game from the Sudan. All things are mine. I am monarch, not only of all I survey, but of much that I have not surveyed and probably never will survey.

Where the tsetse rules, sleep-sickness prevails. All the territories through which I travelled are ravaged by this dread scourge. At Fort Crampel the hospital contained seventy patients suffering from this disease. It is possible that the presence of the tsetse must account in part for the paucity of villages and inhabitants on the banks of the Gribangi. Down south, on the Ubangi and in the Welle basin, I found similar conditions prevailing. The disease is spreading in those regions. The administrator at Yakoma prohibited me from journeying on the Welle, because of the prevalence of sleep-sickness. In Uganda the drastic measures adopted by the Government have put a period to the spread of the disease, though it still survives sporadically. In the Belgian Congo the sickness is found everywhere, and it is specially destructive along the Lualaba, where I noticed that villages which formerly lined the banks for miles and miles had in certain areas been completely wiped out. In Nyasaland, far from being on the decrease, sleep-sickness is spreading, and the tsetse has a much wider range now than when I visited the country in 1903.

The researches of the Commission presided over by Sir David Bruce seem to have established this much, that not merely the *glossina palpalis*, but also the *glossina morsitans* (known familiarly as the 'cattle tsetse') acts as host to the trypanosome of sleep-sickness. This immensely increases the range of the disease, and creates it a greater menace than ever to human life. The only practical measure that has been suggested in order to reduce the number of fly and limit the scope of its action, is the destruction of the big game on which the fly feeds and by which it is conveyed from one habitat to another. In any case, the danger of infection by this dread disease, for which as yet no remedy has been dis-

covered, is exceedingly great. And yet, how many missionaries, officials, travellers, traders and hunters stand constantly exposed to it; how many has it already cut off, and how many tens of thousands of natives are to be counted among its victims! It may well be our hope and prayer that science will speedily discover an effective antidote to the most terrible scourge that has fallen on Africa in the course of its long history.

### *The Way, the Country, and the People*

At Fort Crampel I forsook the river and took to the broad highway. I had occasion when in Kamerun to admire the roads which the Germans have constructed into the Hinterland, and here I found reason to pay the same tribute of admiration to the enterprise of the French. The great broad road stretches from Fort Crampel to Fort Sibut—smooth and straight, hard and firm, constructed on the strictest principles of the late lamented Macadam (query: who was he?), supplied at accurate intervals with kilometre-poles, and bordered by the thin wire that connects even this remote world with that mighty throbbing world in which pulses the life of humanity. I marched blithely, for across this road there seemed to come to me the far-off hum of busy activities, the roar of the railway, the rattle of the van, and the voices of men as the sound of many waters. Roaming along this road, sheltered at intervals by the shade cast by a forest sentinel, hearkening to the music of the woods, marvelling at the fantastic snow-white clouds that rose from the horizon to overshadow weary men and panting beasts, I was reminded of another way of which it was said in olden time, 'The wayfaring men, yea fools, shall not err therein.'

The stages of this highway are clearly marked, for at distances of from twenty-five to thirty-five kilometres (eighteen to twenty-one miles) the Government has placed suitable rest-houses, which are kept in order by a native caretaker. Usually there are two, each containing three rooms, the whole being surrounded by a wide veranda. On the supposition that you have made an early start, you will probably reach the 'gîte' at eleven o'clock. The caretaker appears to take your orders. Sometimes he has a few words of French, and then a limited interchange of thought is possible; sometimes he has none, in which case you must fall back on

your little vocabulary of Banda, or resort to the ancient and honourable language of signs. Food was scarce and dear on this route, fowls were unprocurable, and eggs a luxury to be dreamed of but never indulged. I made valiant efforts to obtain fresh meat from the bush, but though I lighted on the tracks of buffaloes, and saw swift movements under the trees which denoted the presence of smaller game, I secured nothing for the pot.

There is a tiny antelope in these woods of which I saw only the horns and the skin. The Banda call it the *bele*, and it belongs apparently to the *neotragi* or pigmy antelopes. The horns were but one and a quarter inches in length, and the animal itself could have been very little larger than a good-sized cat. I was very anxious to see, and if possible shoot, one of these little creatures, but though I searched the woods my quest was vain. The natives, on being closely examined, stated that the *bele* was to be found 'all over the place'; but there seemed to me to be a better chance of finding a needle in a haystack than a creature twelve inches high in herbage six feet tall.

On the 8th July I was able to write in my journal: 'Passed Ugurras to-day, which lies on the watershed between the Shari and the Ubangi.' I now crossed into the third of the great river-basins of North Central Africa: the Niger-Benue being the first, the Shari-Chad the second, and this, the Ubangi-Congo, the third. The streams which we forded began to take a southerly direction. The aspect of the country was now totally different to what we had seen in the Shari-Logone area. The surface was undulating, little ranges of hills were not infrequent, and granite outcrops showed themselves from time to time. Fort Crampel lies under a great rock of granite, from the summit of which I obtained magnificent views of the surrounding country. Fort Sibut (native name, Krebadje) lies on the Tomi River, which after joining the Kemo falls into the Ubangi at Fort de Possel.

At Fort Sibut I was cordially welcomed by the administrator, Monsieur Plessis. Fain would I have claimed him as a long-lost relative, but for the fact that his family, in the course of its voyage over the ocean of Time, has somewhere dropped overboard, as useless ballast, the *du* to which our branch of the family firmly clings. So though I was willing

to accept his hospitality, I refused, as a fox that has retained his brush, to acknowledge any relationship with the tailless variety. Still, we could not avoid the genealogical question, and I explained to him, as far as my limited French permitted me, that my great-great-great-great-great-grandfather Jean Prieur du Plessis, late of Poictiers, set foot on the shores of Table Bay in the year 1688; and that in two and a half centuries one can forget a good many languages.

Administrator Plessis indulgently overlooked my ignorance of his and my mother-tongue, and forebore to laugh at my frantic and funny attempts to produce an intelligible French sentence. He took me over his garden and overwhelmed me with fruit. He sent me vegetables, supplying my table with maize, beetroot, cabbage, and carrots. On the next day he found me the men necessary for my further march, and sped the parting as he had welcomed the coming guest. At Fort Sibut I also met M. Maran, a native of Martinique, who had, however, enjoyed a liberal education at Bordeaux, and was able to speak a few words of English. M. Maran invited me to tea, and treated me with the utmost courtesy and respect. I found him a man with an intelligent interest in the language and customs of the Banda people, and through his assistance I was able to collect a small vocabulary. The Banda speech shows no resemblances to the Bantu family, though I have detected a few points of similitude between it and the Azande language. The Banda is not a sex-denoting language, and in this it follows the Bantu type. In other respects it appears to be one of the most primitive of languages; for I am informed that the verb has no conjugation, no tenses and no moods; that the noun plural is formed by prefixing *a-* for animated beings and leaving the word unchanged for inanimate things, and that counting is done in the scale of five. It is probable, however, that further research into the language will reveal much greater inflexional possibilities than are yet apparent.

The Banda people, with whom the Mandja tribe is very closely connected, extend over a wide area. I think that their number has been estimated at two millions; but this would appear to be an exaggerated figure. Nevertheless, they are spread all over the basins of the Cuango, Kemo, and Umbella rivers, and their language is spoken right away north to Fort Archambault. The men, though well built, did not

strike me as particularly powerful: the women are small, have pleasant faces, and are not in the least timid. They generally wear a bunch of leaves before and behind, but frequently are clothed only with beads and ornaments. The ornament inserted in the lip is called *azerra*, the beads attached to the hair are *potta*, the string round the waist is called *kabu*, and the tiny tassel in front is *jinde*. The torso-tattoo is known as *eturi*, the bracelet is *bingi*, and the pipe *kadubba*. Lip-rings are quite common, but the most distinctive ornament is the long pendant of glass or metal inserted into the lower lip and hanging almost on to the breast-bone. The incisor teeth both in men and women are often filed to a point.

### *On the Mohammedan Question*

Before finally leaving the regions of the Benue and the Shari, I wish to say something on the Mohammedan question, which is so prominent in the Western Sudan, but becomes less acute directly we cross the Ubangi. The menace of Mohammedanism, though a commonplace in the consideration of African mission policy, is a matter whose gravity we realise but imperfectly. The traveller through districts that are Mohammedan, or are being Mohammedanised, beholds in actual, vivid scenes what the reader in his armchair at home can only faintly picture to himself. Hence the duty of the former to touch, if he can, the imagination of the latter. Islam works silently and subtly. There is, as yet, not much open and systematic propaganda. There is no street preaching, no village evangelisation (to use a Christian term), no educational activity. The faith of the Prophet is spread in quite other ways. The manner in which the devotees of Islam extend their religion approximates to the way in which the earliest Christians propagated their faith. It is with the Moslems, as it was with the first Christians, almost wholly a matter of personal testimony and example.

Every Mohammedan by virtue of his religious beliefs and practices is a missionary. By mere example, more than by precept, he extends and commends his religion. Observe his faithfulness in prayer. Five times a day he turns to Mecca and recites his orisons. No matter what duty he may be engaged in, that duty is for the time being relinquished.

No matter where he is, his environment is for the time being forgotten. In the course of my railway journeys in Nigeria we halted one day on the bank of a river to enable the engine to replenish its water-supply. A Mohammedan descended from the coach adjoining my own, removed his sandals and began to repeat his prayers. Presently the locomotive, having drunk its fill of water, began to move slowly forward. Oblivious to the train's motion, the Mohammedan remained absorbed in his devotions. When the coaches were already in pretty swift movement, a friendly bystander touched the absent-minded worshipper on the shoulder. The latter sprang to his feet, seized his sandals, dashed after the retreating train, and swung himself on board with astonishing agility. A roar of laughter greeted the close of this wayside comedy; but I pondered on the deeper meaning of the incident, and recognised in the abstracted Moslem an earnestness and an absorption which tend insensibly but inevitably to propagate Mohammedanism.

Look again at the Mohammedan performing his ablutions. He will leave his compartment, during the detention of the train at a sleepy station, and proceed with his kettle in his hand to wash his face and his feet. A hundred pairs of eyes are watching him, idly it may be, or it may be with some show of interest. Everybody knows that these ablutions are not due to any exaggerated love of cleanliness and cold water, but are the ceremonial washings prescribed by the Koran. Insensibly again the impression produced on the mind of the onlooker is: 'Here is a man to whom his religion is worth something, and who for the sake of his faith is ready for deeds of self-abnegation and self-sacrifice.'

In the above paragraphs, be it understood, I am describing not one of the religious orders—not a mallâm, or an imâm, or a hadji—but an ordinary Mohammedan merchant or trader. These merchants are great travellers, and journey from their base in Northern Nigeria along the great commercial highways to the towns and seaports of the Gold and Ivory Coasts, Togoland, Dahomey, Southern Nigeria, Kamerun and French Congo; to the territories that lie around the Shari, Logone, Gribangi, Bamingi, Nana and Kotto rivers; and even to the banks of the Ubangi and the Mbomu. Near the confluence of the two latter rivers I landed, one wet, dark night, at a village of the Ba-yakoma. The only available

rest-house, so-called, was occupied by a Mohammedan trader, who answered to the name of Masaar. He was tall, dignified, polite, and spoke an English which surprised me by its excellence. I questioned him as to his origin. He was, he said, a Mohammedan Yolof from Senegal, who had learnt English in a mission school at St. Louis. Yet here he was, transacting business, and incidentally spreading his faith, three thousand miles away from his home. He had with him his canoes, his wives, his children, his goods, and his servants and paddlers. Thus travelling and trading, he was making his way, by slow stages, to Rafai, one of the Mohammedan sultanates on the Mbomu River. Masaar is, in my estimation, an unpaid missionary, who by the prestige of his position and his wealth, by his prayers, which I saw him faithfully recite, by his ceremonial observances, and by the Islamic charms and amulets which he foists upon the superstitious natives, is steadily and uninterruptedly propagating the religion of the Crescent.

Exigencies of space forbid me to show, as I would like, in some detail, by what easy and natural processes Islam lays its blighting touch upon a young and virile pagan tribe. The Mohammedan pedlar, with his two or three donkey-loads of Hausa cloth and leather goods, and of Manchester prints, beads, mirrors and knives, arrives at a pagan village and deposits himself and his goods under the guests' tree. Communications are conducted through the medium of Hausa or Fulani, or, if the village be off the main track, and correspondingly backward and primitive, by means of an interpreter. The trader announces his intention of 'sitting down' at the place for two or three days. He then opens his packs, and propitiates the chief by the gift of two or three articles of small intrinsic value but great local worth. Business at first is slow, but after the fears and suspicions of the villagers have been laid to rest, it becomes exceedingly brisk. In three days' time the pedlar ties up his loads and departs, richer by a few score of fowls, a couple of dozen goats, and it may be by a purseful of coins also. Two months later he reappears, and is welcomed as an old acquaintance. The chief treats him more generously, and is rewarded with more generous gifts, which may now take the form of a *riga* (upper robe), a tarbûsh or a turban, and a verse from the holy Koran, which is worn round the neck as a charm. The native chief has now adopted the Mohammedan dress. The first stage

of his transformation from pagan to Moslem is complete. At the next visit of the trader, the chief will watch him at his ablutions and his prayers, and try to imitate him. This is the second stage. Subsequently he will ask to be taught to repeat one or two Hausa prayers. The words may be incomprehensible, but what of that? Does not the whole of religion consist of mysterious words and cabalistic signs? And thus the transforming process reaches its swift conclusion. The chief himself, whose 'conversion' to Islam is but skin-deep, may not be a very sincere and convinced believer, but his children will be more than sincere—they will be fanatical. The chief and his family being won, the subjection of the whole tribe to the authority of the Prophet is but a matter of time. And thus does Islam extend and consolidate its influence in the lands of the Sudan.

# CHAPTER XI

## ON THE UBANGI

And the width of the waters, the flush
Of the gray expanse where he floats,
Freshening its current and spotted with foam
As it draws to the ocean, may strike
Peace to the soul of the man on its breast;
As the pale waste widens around him—
As the banks fade dimmer away,
As the stars come out, and the night-wind
Brings up the stream
Murmurs and scents of the infinite sea.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

### *By River Steamer to Mobaye*

FORT DE POSSEL is known far and wide among the natives as Kemo, being situated at the spot where the river of that name falls into the Ubangi. We may set it down as a rule to which there are few exceptions, that whenever any place has been honoured with an adventitious European name, the native designation will survive, and the other be confined to maps and official documents. Talk to a native of Fort de Possel or Fort Sibut and he will stare blankly at you; but ask him the way to Kemo or Krebadje and he will throw back his head and point his chin in the required direction.

Fort de Possel is not an imposing *poste*. It struggles along the flat river-bank, and consists of a number of wattle-and-daub constructions which do duty for offices, stores and residences. In front gleams the broad Ubangi, three-quarters of a mile in width; behind stretches a still broader meadow, which in the rainy season is nothing but a marsh. The eastern boundary is formed by the Kemo River; so that Possel is shut in by water or marsh on three sides, and must be mosquito-haunted and malaria-ridden to a degree that I would rather conceive than experience. Letters written on the spot naturally give a more lifelike picture of a place than

reminiscences set down eighteen months later, and so I extract the following from a note that I penned here:

'The Ubangi is a fine sheet of water. I sit at my table on the verandah of my room, and look out upon it. There is a deal of bustle round about. Frenchmen at a table near by are comparing notes of their travelling experiences. Natives diversely clad, from the nought of the primitive savage to the flowing robes of the Mohammedan trader, are talking, laughing, running, gesticulating—all agog with excitement over the festivities of to-morrow. For to-morrow is '14 juillet,' anniversary of the storming of the Bastille in 1789, and the national holiday of 'La République Française.' You should hear me talking French nowadays: it would make a cat laugh. Somehow I make myself understood, though I can't understand when spoken to, unless they address me as if I were an infant of two and a half. Everything is horribly scarce and horribly dear. A three-pound tin of sugar costs three shillings and ninepence: a diminutive tin of biscuits runs to half-a-crown: a pound of lard is three shillings. Native food is not much cheaper, comparatively speaking. For three chickens I had to pay the sum of six shillings and threepence. This sounds reasonable enough, but remember that the ordinary price of a chicken in Central Africa is only threepence; so that in Possel the market price of chickens was exceeded by seven hundred per cent. The worst is that last night I left a chicken on my table to be eaten cold for breakfast, but a prowling dog or thievish cat got in at my unprotected door, and this morning I found my breakfast vanished. My two boys also came to me with long faces, and informed me that the goats had devoured their maize. I shall have to report this matter to the authorities.'

At Possel I was delayed six days, waiting for the little steamboat that plies between the rapids a few miles lower down and Mobaye two hundred miles up-river. When the vessel arrived and took me on board, I found that there was deck accommodation only. A cabin there was, but it was appropriated to the sole use of the captain. My fellow-travellers were a French sergeant and a Roman Catholic *pater*, the latter proceeding to his sphere of work at Banzyville, the former under orders to relieve another official at Semio, on the Mbomu River. The craft on which we found ourselves lacked room and comfort. Picture to yourself a boat fifty

feet in length, lying very low in the water, with two steel barges attached one on either side. These barges, filled with a miscellaneous cargo and a heterogeneous collection of native passengers, considerably impede the progress and hinder the steerage of the vessel. The steering-gear itself is right forward, immediately behind it is a bit of deck-space reserved for the passengers, if any, and then follow the captain's cabin, the cuddy, and the furnace and engine, round which are piled the huge logs of wood that serve as fuel in these coal-less regions.

To each of the three passengers were assigned eighteen square feet of room, where he was expected to eat, sit, lounge and sleep. During the day my little X-table stood before me, piled with a few books and my writing materials. Three times a day Suli would approach deferentially, and ask permission to remove this litter and lay the cloth. Bread and coffee, meat and vegetables, would make their appearance, and I would fall to. Everybody is responsible for his own meals; and as I had my two attendants travelling with me, and hardly earning their salt, I was not ungrateful for this arrangement. We Europeans, of course, found it easy to keep the peace, but among our retainers quarrels were not infrequent as to priority of access to the cooking-range. At evening, when dinner had been duly disposed of, my valet again came forward to fold up my table and chair and arrange my bed, and a very tight fit it was to crowd three stretchers, surmounted by three mosquito-nets, into the narrow space available. There were no conveniences of any kind, and no dressing-room to which we could withdraw, and we had to make and unmake our toilets in full view of the natives of both sexes, who lay in the barges six feet away. I generally contrived to retire late and rise early, so that under cover of the friendly darkness I got through these processes without too much loss of decorum.

The rains had fairly set in by the time we were navigating the Ubangi. At Possel already I had had a taste of the suddenness and severity of these Congolese downpours. The room which harboured me there was no defence against the elements. The roof leaked like a sieve. The flood descended the walls, dropped from the thatch, entered at the door and gradually surrounded me, cutting off my retreat and imprisoning me on a peninsula in the furthest corner of the

AN AZANDE MAN AND HIS WIVES

(The man is suffering from elephantiasis of the legs)

apartment, from which I viewed the implacable advance of this deluge with apprehension and dismay. So too, on the first evening of our voyage, we retired to our respective couches at ten o'clock, but not to an undisturbed night. A little after midnight was heard the first growl of the tempest. The lightning shot down forked flashes, and distant reverberations reached our ears. We hoped that the storm would pass to right or to left. But no, it came nearer. The blaze of the lightning was brighter; the roar of the thunder grew heavier. On an instant, as though a sluice had been opened, the torrents fell. The full fury of the storm struck us. A blinding flash, a simultaneous thunder-clap, and then sheets of rain and a wind that tore at the canvas. In half an hour's time the anger of the elements had died down to a low mutter, but the rain continued in a steady rattle until dawn. It was well for us that we lay firmly moored to the shore, or the wind might have driven our boat into the darkness and the flood, where with fires quenched and boiler empty we would have been in parlous condition.

The rain was persistent and fell daily during our river journey. Whenever the showers and mists permitted we caught sight of the banks and enjoyed the fine scenery. The north or French bank of the Ubangi is more heavily wooded than the south or Belgian shore. Clearings and villages sometimes show, but generally the forest extends up to and beyond the water's edge, and the great trees trail their branches in the flowing stream. The south bank is more open, revealing green hills dotted with sparse forest, and reminding me somewhat of the coast of Kaffirland as seen from the deck of a Natal steamer. In the midst of the stream are large islands, of which one, which was inhabited and covered with a grove of graceful palms, specially roused my admiration. From time to time we passed villages where dwell a tribe called the Magwassi, who are fishermen, agriculturists and keepers of goats and fowls. I cannot call them wealthy, nor robust, and certainly not fierce, although Savage Landor, in his *Across Widest Africa* (1907) says that the natives here met him with hostile demonstrations when he attempted to land. Their clothing is scanty. The men have a bit of cloth between the legs, and the women a similar bit behind and another scrap, quite insufficient for decency, in front. Their ornaments are few, and consist of the usual

string of beads around the neck and a brass bangle or two at the ankles.

*Mobaye and Banzyville*

Five days after leaving Possel we reached Mobaye. A range of hills lies athwart the river, and at the gap through which the stream has forced its way are found rapids which put a period to the further progress of the steamer. Just where the river is narrowest are situated Mobaye, the French post, on the north bank, and Banzyville, the Belgian station, on the south bank. Disembarking at Mobaye I was conducted to the premises of the 'N.T.C.U.' (Navigation-Transport Congo-Ubangi), and lodged in a room in a well-built brick house under iron roof, by far my most palatial quarters between Lokoja on the Niger and Kampala on the Victoria Nyanza. Special kindness was shown me here by M. Paquet, who hospitably entertained me, assisted me to procure a boat for the voyage to Yakoma, and smoothed over difficulties which arose between me and the Belgian authorities with reference to imposts and licences.

Both Mobaye and Banzyville are well situated on the slopes of the rocky ridge referred to above. There is no broad marshy plain, as at Possel, to act as a breeding-ground for anopheles and other pests. The incline of the ground, and the firm dry soil, afford excellent situations for townships. These places must have been great centres of trade when the rubber boom was on, and for all I know they may be prosperous still. The export of ivory is exceptionally great. The little steamer that brought us upstream carried a fine cargo of tusks down-river, and it was a sight to make the mouth water when I stood on the beach and viewed the rows and rows of elephant teeth lying ready for shipment. Elephants are plentiful on the Ubangi. On the south shore they are protected by the heavy licence of £40 which the Belgian Government imposes; but on the north side they may be hunted gratis. Such at least was the privilege extended to me by the official of whom I inquired what was to pay for an elephant hunt. Probably this was no constant and general permission, but merely a personal concession granted me when I explained that I was not a professional hunter, and was not animated by any very strong desire to shoot a pachyderm. As a matter of fact, I saw not a single elephant during my passage through

French territory. On the Belgian side these great beasts are found in large herds, which frequently destroy the crops of the natives. One morning I was seduced into going into the dense bush for the ostensible purpose of hunting *bœuf*, by which I understood buffalo. After a long and wet tramp through marshes and morasses by the score, my guide announced that there was no buffalo but plenty of elephant, and in proof of this assertion he showed me the tracks and leavings of a herd. But I refused to be drawn off on this scent. So forward we went. Presently my leader halted, bent his ear, then lifted his hand and said in a stage whisper *elephant*. He insisted on taking me to them: if I was afraid to shoot, he said, he would kill the beast himself. I explained the reasons why I dared not yield to this temptation. Pointing to the 'split' cartridge that lay in my hand I told him that this kind of bullet could not by any possibility pass through the thick hide of this great animal so as to inflict a mortal wound. And moreover, I continued, I have to pay a thousand francs for an elephant, if I venture to shoot one, and that I cannot afford. The first argument was doubtless considered very inconclusive, and the second highly ridiculous; and to this day, I verily believe, I am spoken of in that village as the cowardly white man who was afraid to face an elephant.

### *Negotiating the Rapids*

I cannot say that I look back with very keen pleasure to the six days which I spent in a boat between Mobaye and Yakoma. The barge was small and unserviceable, and so crowded that I could hardly move. Once seated in my chair, seated I had to remain until at the end of five or six hours my crew touched at a village for food, and I was able to stretch my cramped limbs. Moreover the months of July, August and September form the height of the rainy season in North Congoland, and we could expect, and did in fact experience, a daily downpour which lasted on the average for six hours. So long as we were on the steamboat these thunder-storms, though alarming, did not cause actual discomfort. There was a stout roof above us and a defence of canvas all around. But on the boat things were very different. It had been supplied with a shelter of poles and grass, the object of which was to ward off the worst rays of the vertical sun: as a defence

against a storm it was useless, if not positively dangerous. Over this shelter I found it advisable to cast the fly of my tent, and in this way I obtained some protection against the moisture from above. But the comfort which I thus secured was small, for after a heavy downpour the water rose inside the boat, washed over the few boards laid down for my chair to stand upon, wetted my cases, rendering provisions and clothes all damp and mouldy, and introduced the germs of trouble into my system, so that from this time forth I was pretty frequently subject to rheumatism and malaria.

There is a series of rather dangerous rapids, called by Boyd Alexander the Setema Rapids, on this section of the river, and on the second day out from Mobaye we spent two or three hours in dragging the boat through the surging waters. The day fortunately remained fine and dry, the usual downfall only overtaking us that evening at six. When we arrived at the commencement of the rapids the *capita* of the boat requested me to disembark and march along the shore. I asked whether there was to be a land porterage for my baggage also. No, he did not think that would be necessary, if only my two boys and I would get out and lighten the boat. Now I have the strongest objections to leaving my goods to the tender mercies of the natives, and I had moreover reason for suspecting that my crew were not above appropriating any loose articles that they might find lying about; so I pointed out to the *capita* that my two boys could assist in hauling the boat through the rapids, while my weight would not make any appreciable difference one way or another. With this the *capita* was forced to be content, though from his attitude I should guess that he was chagrined.

Tremendous exertions were necessary to haul our barge through the dashing waters. If it had been a boat of wood merely, it would have been smashed to atoms upon the stones and jagged rocks, or would at the least have been so bruised and battered as to have filled and sunk in no time. But it was built of tested steel, and was able to withstand the sharp teeth of the cruel reefs and ridges. The method by which we overcame these obstacles was somewhat as follows. In the bow of the boat stood the *capita* and the helmsman, armed with strong poles, with which they kept the boat's nose always away from the shore. On the bank, in the water, and upon jutting rocks struggled the crew, hauling away at the chain

that was attached to the hawse-hole. Their efforts naturally drew the bow of the barge towards the bank, while the *capita* and the coxwain exerted themselves in thrusting it off. And so we were alternately hauled along by the chain and swept down by the relentless water; then dashed against the rocks and violently forced away by the strokes of the two men stationed forward. The greatest difficulty arose when we had to negotiate a sharp corner at the highest and final rapid. The water was too swift and too deep for our men to stand in midstream and haul the boat straight forward in the teeth of the current. They were obliged to take their stand upon the shore, so that, as soon as the chain tightened in response to their effort, the nose of the boat turned shorewards and the boat itself was flung upon the rocks and swept immediately downstream. Then the whole proceeding had to be done over again. I do not know how long a time we spent at this awkward turn. I only know that I at length disembarked in sheer desperation, and tried to direct operations from a coign of vantage on a large smooth rock. Whether my directions were of any real service, or whether the crew was only stirred to redoubled exertions by my shouts and gesticulations, I cannot tell; certain it is that we soon after had the satisfaction of seeing our barge win through to the quiet reaches above the rapids.

### *Beggars and Thieves*

It was during the passage of these turbulent stretches of water that I first began to be pestered by the men who were poling the boat. They proved themselves to be the most shameless beggars that it has been my misfortune to meet in Africa. Let me pay a tribute at this stage to the character of the African in general. He is not a beggar, nor is he a thief. There are exceptions, of course; but this is the rule. In the narratives of older travellers we read constantly of the extortions of native chiefs, of their insatiable greed, and of the peculations of the people at large. Now it may be that this system of *hongo* or imposts has been swept away by the establishment of settled European government, and that we have to thank European rule for making travel pleasant as well as safe. But even apart from the systematic extortions of powerful chiefs, one would expect the African to be always

cadging when the white man, who to his mind rolls in all the 'wealth of Ormuz and of Ind,' appears upon the scene. But this is not the case. I think that I can count upon the fingers of one hand the occasions on which a chief really pestered me for a gift or begged this or that particular object from me. As a rule he comported himself with deference and with dignity. He would take the present I offered as remuneration for the night at his village. On one or two occasions he would respectfully remind me, when I had fallen into a fit of abstraction, that something was due to him for the accommodation that he had provided. Generally, he received what I bestowed with gratitude. Once I remember that a chief brought back the money, protesting that it was not a sufficient dole; and I discovered to my amusement and dismay, that in the dark of early morning I had greased his palm with two bits of nickel worth a penny instead of the two pieces of silver which it was my custom to award. On many occasions the chief was not to be found when my caravan was ready to start in the chill dawn, and I had to have him roused to receive his *baksheesh*. So that I say emphatically that the Africans are not incontinent beggars. But the rule has frequently to be proved by the exception. And in my Yakoma polers I found the exception.

While we were negotiating the rapids they began to call my attention to the fact—or let me rather say, the statement—that they were hungry, and demanded of me that I should provide food. This responsibility I denied, affirming that I had hired boat and crew from the N.T.C.U. for the journey to Yakoma, and that they should direct their complaints to the agent of that Company. This argument, plainly, was incontrovertible, so they fell upon another tack. As we surmounted one rapid after the other, they would look meaningly at me and say *baksheesh, baksheesh*. But they had already annoyed me with their persistence and their impertinence, so I resolutely refused to distribute the smallest largesse.

It is but a step from the beggar to the thief. When my crew found that they could get nothing out of me by solicitation, they began to lay nimble fingers upon unobserved and unprotected odds and ends. I had purchased two bunches of bananas, which hung suspended from the roof of my shelter. The individual bananas disappeared from these

bunches in most mysterious manner. I bought eight fine large cobs of maize for my own use. When next I counted them there were but two. A dessertspoon, the only one which I possessed, was stolen from the saucepan. My two retainers complained that nothing that they bought was safe for a moment: their food supply dwindled before their eyes in alarming fashion, and they only retained possession of their clothing and chattels by sitting upon them and never stirring from their post.

Whatever these thievish Yakoma could not steal they fingered. From a pole in the boat hung my binoculars, which cost me the sum of seven pounds ten shillings in London. One night, by an oversight, I left this instrument hanging in the boat while I went ashore to sleep there. Next morning I found that it had been loosened and allowed to drop into the water, whether by accident or through intentional malevolence I cannot say, and for the rest of my journey it was quite useless. It was at one of these villages, on a dark, rainy night, that I met the Mohammedan named Masaar, to whom I have referred above. When I complained of the thievish habits of my polers, he chimed in, with indignation written all over him, 'Oh, these Ba-Yakoma here are all liars, beggars, and thieves.' Apparently he had had enough of them as well as I.

The worst of the matter is that some of these boatmen consider themselves to be Christians, and wear crucifixes round their necks. I saw several of them cross themselves religiously before they drank water or began to eat (probably purloined) food. Apparently they are converts of the mission of the Capuchins at Banzyville, to which my friend Père Fulgence, whom I met on the steamer, belongs. Had I known when talking to him on the 'Church' and the Churches, I would have said, 'Good father, do you not think that it would be as well if you—and not only you, but all of us—were to leave doctrines and dogmas and the "pomp and circumstance" of religion, and teach the African the elementary virtues of honesty, truthfulness and integrity?'

Let me make just one or two more observations before I close this chapter, *apropos* of nothing in particular. When out on that unlucky hunt which procured for me so unenviable a reputation among these peoples of the Upper Ubangi, I

observed the natives gathering a species of long, hairy, yellow caterpillar, which they look upon as a peculiar dainty. When the evening mess of porridge is ready, the caterpillar is held before the flame and slightly singed, then placed in the midst of the porridge, much as the cook plants a sweatmeat on the summit of a frosted cake. This is considered a great delicacy all over the continent. When I visited Luebo, the chief station of the American Presbyterians in Central Congoland, I found that it was customary to grant a half-holiday to the girls of the boarding-school in order to enable them to go out into the bush and gather these appetisers. I have myself already eaten locusts (which taste for all the world like straw dipped in cod-liver oil), but I draw the line at caterpillars.

The natives hereabouts build a hut with a very pointed roof, that towers above the low walls like a small obelisk. Since the rainfall is so abundant and comes down in such torrents, this custom would appear to be a very sensible one. It is of course a much more toilsome task to erect a steep roof like this, and it requires very much more thatching than a flatter structure, but the greater security against moisture and the larger cubic amount of pure air make for comfort and for health.

AZANDE FAMILY AND LEAF-THATCHED HUT

# CHAPTER XII

## IN NORTH CONGOLAND

Wherein I spake of most disastrous chances,
Of moving accidents by flood and field. . . .
And of the Cannibals that each other eat,
The Anthropophagi, and men whose heads
Do grow beneath their shoulders.

SHAKESPEARE, *Othello.*

THE River Welle, which was first explored along its upper reaches by George Schweinfurth, is now spelled Uelé in Belgian maps and documents. I have, however, retained the older spelling. The Welle, which flows wholly through Belgian territory, and the Mbomu, which forms the boundary between the Belgian and the French spheres of influence, combine at Yakoma to form the Ubangi. It was at Yakoma that I had my first attack of malaria, and my recollections of that place are not of the happiest. My detention was fortunately not a long one, and by the kindly offices of M. Piquet I was enabled to travel on his *pirogue* for some distance up the Mbomu. The course which I would naturally have followed on the Welle itself was closed to me because of sleeping-sickness regulations. I travelled accordingly somewhat to the north of the river, until I reached Bambili, when I crossed to the south side. The Welle basin belongs to the best watered and most fruitful of the countries of the Congo, but as all the water-routes to this portion of the country are interrupted by rapids, the development of its resources has not proceeded so rapidly as would otherwise have been the case.

### *The Azande People*

The most important tribe that I met in the basin of the Welle is the Azande. Before the European occupation of the country they were passionately devoted to cannibalism, and for this reason were known to their neighbours as the Nyam-nyam—a word whose sound is sufficiently suggestive

of its meaning. As late as the year 1912 an elephant-hunter who had been pursuing his calling in the Lado enclave, which lies just to the north-east of the Welle basin, expressed a very emphatic opinion on the character of the Azande. Hearing that I contemplated crossing the continent at this point, and proposed travelling through the Azande country, he said: 'But that's impossible; they are cannibals, you understand, cannibals.' This sounded sufficiently awful in 1912, but in 1914 I travelled for more than a month in Azande-land, and I don't think that I reflected more than twice or thrice on their supposititious fondness for human flesh. Certainly there is no trace of cannibalistic practices among the Azande to-day. They are an intelligent, cleanly, polite and pleasant-featured people, in whose open countenances and gentle eyes I could detect nothing that would lead me to suspect a lurking taste for roast missionary. I admit, however, that this proves nothing, for appearances are notoriously deceptive, and the most prepossessing Congolese tribes are those for whose cannibalism we have the most unimpeachable testimony. What the Azande were is a matter of small moment; what they are to become is a question vastly more important. For this great tribe, that extends all over North Congoland, and overflows into French territory and the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, is still practically unevangelised. In the approaching conflict between Christianity and Islam it occupies a position of the highest strategic value, lying as it does between the most advanced outposts of both forces. It is a very populous tribe; its language is widely understood; among adjacent tribes its prestige stands very high. The Azande are undoubtedly a people worth winning.

I cannot say that this tribe impressed me as being particularly industrious. They do a little to agriculture, but nature is so generous that when once they have cleared away the forest, they have but to scratch the soil in order to reap rich harvests. The presence of the tsetse makes the raising of cattle impossible, and the only live-stock which they possess are goats, dogs, and fowls. I saw no weaving going on among them, though they smelt a little iron and manufacture knives and hoes, cutlasses and spears. They construct huts of two shapes, the one round, as are by far the greater number of African huts, and the other oblong, a shape which may have been introduced under Arab influence.

These huts are generally thatched with a species of stout leaf, like that of the magnolia tree, giving a very pretty appearance to their dwellings. One would not imagine that such a roof could be watertight, but the thatching is done so carefully that there is hardly any leakage, unless the wind be so powerful as to drive the rain up the slope of the roof. The walls of the huts are almost invariably decorated with representations of men and animals, not infrequently hunting scenes, and though the natives have no sense of perspective, the pictures are often quite vivid and lifelike. In some cases I have seen attempts at painting, and the figures then strongly resemble those Bushman paintings which are found so universally in South Africa.

Since the Azande do no weaving it can be understood that they set little store by clothing. The men are much better clothed than the women. Many of them wear trousers and shirt which they have procured from the nearest trader, and even the boys have at least a loin-cloth. The women, on the contrary, are in many cases satisfied with a banana-leaf, while for unmarried girls a string round the waist must suffice. I have often wondered how to account for this curious fact, which is so much at variance with our conception of what is meet and modest, that in many primitive communities the men go better clothed than the women. Darwin taught us that in nature the law of sexual selection is at work, by which (especially in the case of birds) the female shows greatest predilection for the male with the most brilliant colouring. Anthropologists have not been slow to seize hold of this principle and apply it to the human species. Since in primitive communities dress is, *ex hypothesi*, primarily a matter of ornament and not of protection against cold or covering for modesty, it is natural that the male should be better clothed than the female. I am afraid that this method of reasoning does not carry us very far. The theory does not fit the facts. For I found in most of the primitive tribes that I met that the women were in almost every case the more richly ornamented sex. Tattoo-marks and cicatrices were far more frequent in women than in men; hairdressing was more elaborate, and bead and brass ornaments were more abundant in the weaker sex. Only in the matter of clothing did they lag far behind the males. What is the explanation of this phenomenon?

I think we may take it that the female is more conservative than the male, and this may be one reason for her remaining satisfied for so long with mere ornament as distinct from clothing. The woman is always at home. She is not liable to forced labour, such as carrying loads, working on plantations, collecting rubber or constructing roads, as her husband is. She sees less of the world, and therefore remains longer in the narrow circle of preconceived notions and customary practices. In cases when she is thrown by force of circumstances into contact with a larger world, she quickly adopts some sort of covering in addition to her simple ornaments. Then we ought to remember that the purchasing power of a people like the Azande is not great. The husband can perhaps hardly afford to clothe both himself and his wife or wives. He would naturally argue that as he is the party that earns the money, the earnings should purchase in the first place a covering for his own skin ; and that, as he is in most frequent contact with Europeans, it is right and fitting that he should be the better clothed.

The Azande are distinctly a cleanly people. Their houses are in neat trim, and are generally built on both sides of a road or street. At each end of the village I noticed the dust-hole, into which the rubbish of the place is swept. Those who are familiar with the untidy and indeed filthy appearance of most African villages will appreciate the sanitary arrangements of the average Azande township. At all hours of the day I have seen men, women and children, armed with improvised brooms, sweeping before their doors and around their huts. To the virtue of cleanliness they add the grace of politeness. When I passed through their villages, whether on foot or in the hammock, the men would rise from whatever occupation they might be engaged in, stand at attention, and raise their hands to their forehead in a military salute when I marched by. The politeness, I think, is innate ; but the particular manner of the salutation has been probably copied from the Belgian native soldiers.

The Azande language is as primitive as the people that speak it. Some authorities hold that it reveals greater affinities with the Bantu than with the Sudan group of languages (see *e.g.* the last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, s.v. *Niam-Niam*). This is not my opinion. There are unmistakable resemblances between Azande on the one hand

CROSSING A RIVER ON A SUBMERGED TRUNK

and the Banda and Mandja languages, which are spoken between Forts Possel and Crampel, on the other; and these latter languages have no trace of the characteristic noun-concords, the elaborate verbal conjugations, and the wealth of pronominal suffixes, which are distinguishing marks of Bantu speech. In Azande moreover we find *gu*, *ga*, and *fo* as signs of the nominative, genitive, and dative respectively—a method of case distinction which is quite foreign to Bantu idiom. In vocabulary, too, resemblances between Azande and the Bantu language-group are not very apparent, whereas the resemblances between Banda (or Mandja) and Azande are sufficiently close to challenge attention. I give a brief list, which might have been more extensive had I been able to collect larger vocabularies.

| *English* | *Azande* | *Banda* |
|---|---|---|
| sun, day | ulu, ellemi | ulu |
| fire | we | owu (Mandja wa) |
| elephant | bala | mbana, mbala |
| mouth | mba | ama |
| banana | bo | bo-logu |
| egg | para | pre-ngato (*i.e.* para-ngato, ngato being the word for fowl) |

## *Travels in the Rainy Season*

The months of August and September form the height of the rainy season in North Congoland, and during this period the traveller must anticipate frequent wettings. Morning by morning he must scan the heavens and examine the distant horizon for signs of the coming downpour; and in this country of unending forest this is no easy task, for the great trees leave visible only a small arc of the celestial hemisphere. Then it is highly necessary to possess a knowledge, approximately accurate, of the distances between village and village, so as to calculate the proximity of your haven of refuge when the storm threatens. As I had not the remotest idea of distances, and only a very unreliable list of *stationes*, or resting-places, it may be imagined that I was very often overtaken by unexpected thunderstorms, against which I sometimes found a shelter, and sometimes not. One is never certain when the rain will descend. At times I was roused in the early morning by the sound of raindrops on the thatch.

If it *had* to rain, this was the most satisfactory hour, for I could turn over on my couch and have another snooze. Sometimes the shower came in the afternoon, when we had finished our day's journey and were safely in camp. This, too, was satisfactory. But very frequently the storm assailed us at eight or ten o'clock in the morning, when we were just half-way between two camping-places. Then we would flee to the nearest village, and seek shelter under the eaves of a hut, beneath a projecting veranda, or even inside a dwelling, if it were only tolerably clean, tolerably smokeless and tolerably airy. If we were unlucky enough to be caught in the open, far from villages or roadside shelters, we had to be content to be thoroughly drenched.

The results of the persistent rains were everywhere apparent. The log bridges which the natives construct were washed away, the roads were under water, the rivers were foaming torrents, and plains had changed to impassable morasses. An extract from my diary will show the nature of the difficulties with which I had to contend :—

'Saturday, 29th August 1914.—Rose at 5, and got loads off at 6. Day overcast, but clears up later on. Road very wet and submerged by the surplus rain-water that has escaped its usual channel. Had one bad place to pass, where the ordinary runnel had become a great river. The bridges are long gone and only fragments remain. A canoe carries you across the swiftest of the current, carefully steering its way between the tree-trunks. It deposits you on some partially submerged roots, from where you have to wade a distance of one hundred yards or more to reach *terra firma.* The native passengers gird up their loins and wade. I prefer to be borne on the shoulders of one of my men, who has to exercise the greatest circumspection not to fall over hidden roots and lose both his equilibrium and his load. The water is up to his armpits, and my feet, despite my utmost efforts, are soon trailing in the flood. Finally we reach land, which is muddy but solid. For the rest of the day we have many more streams and bits of submerged roadway to traverse, but happily no more rivers.'

I must pay my native carriers a tribute of praise for the careful manner in which they carried my loads. Only once had I occasion to punish a carrier for dropping a box and breaking a lamp-chimney; as a rule the men exercised the

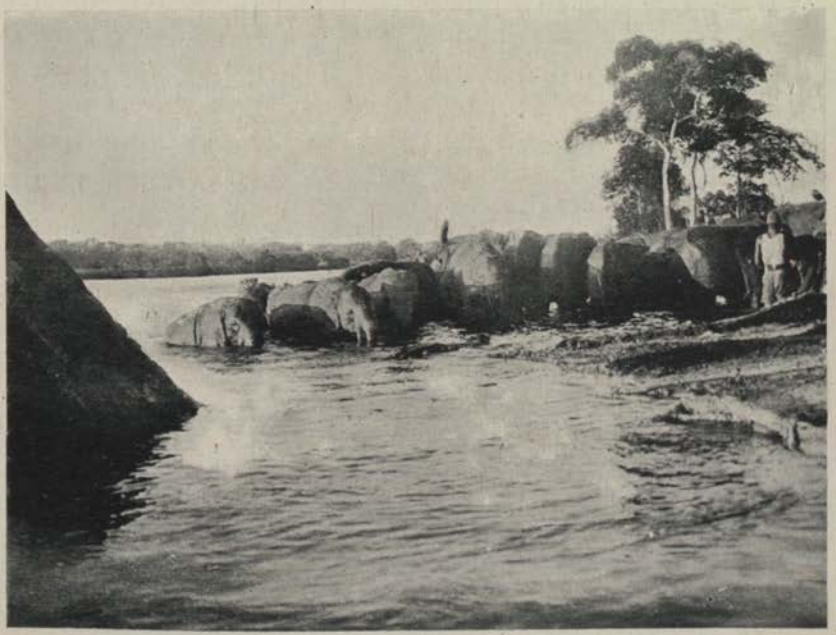
greatest care in their treatment of my trunks. However fragile the native bridge, which was frequently only a single pole, however treacherous the road, however deep the water, never did I see a man miss his foothold and drop a load. On many occasions, when I had scrambled across a tree-trunk on hands and feet, I said to myself, 'No carrier can pass this obstacle with a sixty-pound weight on his head'; and then I would stop to render assistance. But no assistance was necessary; for the native, with his semi-prehensile foot, walks easily and safely across a slippery trunk or a slender pole which the white man shies at and refuses. When negotiating very swift torrents I have seen carriers help each other in this fashion: the foremost man would feel his way with the aid of a stout alpenstock, the one immediately behind him would lay a hand on his companion's shoulder, the other hand being engaged in keeping the load in position; and then both would move forward alternately, feeling their way cautiously, and never moving one foot before the other had been securely planted.

At such places I generally chose the strongest man and got upon his shoulders, and so was borne safely over. On one occasion I attempted to get across a raging stream unaided, but the result was not encouraging. The trunk of a felled tree was the bridge, but the waters had risen so high that it lay at a depth of fifteen or eighteen inches below the surface and in the discoloured stream was wholly invisible. I had noticed three or four natives, among whom were a woman and a little girl, make their way across without mishap, and it seemed to me that it was not too difficult a feat even for a European. But I made the mistake of imagining that the submerged trunk was part of a bridge, which I pictured to myself as being about six feet broad. As a matter of fact it was less than six inches in width. Blissfully ignorant I divested myself of superfluous clothing and courageously entered the flood. My feet straightway slipped on the rounded trunk, and instead of a broad bridge to sustain me, I found only six feet of rushing water, into which I plunged like a stone. The rush of the stream was so great that, despite my most violent exertions, it drew me in under the trunk, until only my head remained above water. Another frantic attempt, and I was nearly safe, when the irresistible suction of the torrent reasserted its strength, and I felt

myself going. At this moment a couple of my porters, who had witnessed the accident from the road, came to the rescue. Holding on to each other in the way I have described, they pushed gently forward, until the nearer one was able to grasp my arm. This gave me just the slight reinforcement which I needed, and with another great effort I succeeded in extricating myself from my precarious position. After this incident my respect rose considerably, first, for the slipperiness and treacherousness of moist tree-trunks, and secondly, for the cleverness and caution of the native African, who so successfully avoids all occasion for stumbling.

There are dangers of another nature which are inseparable from the rainy season. Travelling in the basin of the Welle I suffered for the first time, but pretty continuously, from attacks of malaria. These attacks commenced at Yakoma, where the Welle and the Mbomu combine to form the Ubangi, and they lasted until I reached the healthy highlands of British East Africa. I ascribe the frequent fever-attacks in great measure to the wet season, and the moist garments and moist bed to which I had unhappily to accustom myself. It was malaria in its 'tertian' form which I suffered from. At about three or four o'clock in the afternoon I could expect the onset. I seldom experienced the first, or cold, stage of the attack, and that in a very slight degree only. But the second stage of dry fever, with a rising temperature, was generally pretty protracted. There was nothing to be done but to creep into bed, and lie there, restless and miserable, until the perspiration broke out and brought speedy relief. This occurred during the night, and was followed by a refreshing and sanative slumber. The next morning I felt much better, but on rising with a cheerful mind to the new day's duties, I would find to my surprise that I was weak as a child, and able only to do a little, a very little, marching. The next day the fever would return, and practically at the same hour. The course it ran would be identical with that of the day before yesterday —first, the premonitory feeling of lassitude, then the stage of acute febrile distress, and finally the diaphoretic stage of profuse perspiration. On the fourth morning the physical weakness would be greater than before, and I found myself driven to make use of the hammock for the day's march. My experience was that vigour returns to the frame much sooner when you are constantly moving than when, from

PRIMITIVE NATIVE BRIDGE



ELEPHANTS AT API—THE EVENING BATH

choice or necessity, you lie quiet at one spot. Physical exercise, increasing in duration from day to day, and continual change of air and scene, are contributory causes that aid the system to recover its wonted strength.

### *The Elephants of Api*

The Api river is one of the northern tributaries of the Welle, and upon its left bank lies a Belgian *poste* which is known by the same name. The Government of the Congo Belge has set apart this place as a model farm, where various agricultural experiments are being carried out. The most interesting of these is the attempt to domesticate the African elephant. Hitherto we have been taught to believe that the elephant of our continent, in contradistinction to its more docile Indian brother, will not allow himself to be tamed and broken to ordinary labour. The experiment at Api was undertaken to disprove this theory, and no one can deny that it has been signally successful. I cannot of course compare the virtues of the African and Indian elephant under domestication, and it may well be that the latter is the cleverer of the two; but of the fact that the African species *can* be domesticated I have ocular proof.

When I arrived at Api it was already four in the afternoon. In the forenoon I had been imprisoned from half-past seven to half-past twelve by the punctual daily downpour. The consequence was that instead of a whole afternoon I had but a short two hours of daylight at this interesting place. But how crowded with interest and instruction were these two hours! Immediately on arrival I inquired about the famous elephants. 'Yes, yes,' said M. Mayette, the friendly *chef de poste*, 'you shall see them presently; but be kind enough to drink a cup of tea first.' I admit to being particularly fond of 'the cup which cheers but not inebriates,' especially after a long and thirsty day, and the tea which M. Mayette offered was most fragrant and grateful. But I was so eager to see the *beasties*, and to get if possible a snap or two before darkness set in, that I am afraid my impatience got the better of my manners. I swallowed the tea with unbecoming haste, refused the delicious cake which my kind host produced from his treasured store, and almost before he had tasted his beverage I set down my empty cup and declared myself ready to view the animals.

But I had to restrain my impatience for a little longer. The elephants had not yet returned from the bush. In the meantime M. Mayette showed me some of the other sights of his station—his young buffaloes, the one seven and the other five months old, and quite indistinguishable from a couple of calves of the same age; and his tiny *bongo* antelope, a beautiful creature, one of the rarest and most coveted of the tragelaphs. The *bongo* of North Congoland and the *inyala* of Zululand are two of the most beautifully striped antelopes known. They both inhabit the dense forest, and are found with difficulty, even by the most ardent and most experienced sportsmen. M. Mayette also showed me his experimental gardens, with many kinds of cereals growing, among which I noticed extensive acres covered with rice.

We now learnt that the herd of elephants was approaching, and we stationed ourselves where we could obtain a good view. My first impression was that they were far less black in colour than those I had seen in various zoological gardens. The duller hue of these forest animals may be protective coloration, and they looked precisely as though they had been enjoying a mud-bath. Nor did they show so large as I had hoped. M. Mayette informed me that every one of these animals was caught young, since they never attempt to capture adults; and as the station at Api has only been in existence for some fourteen years, it is evident that we have to do with a herd of immature animals. When full-grown they will no doubt present a much more imposing appearance.

In the midst of the herd, seated upon the neck of one of the largest animals, rode a native keeper, who from his lofty seat seemed to direct the movements not only of the elephant he rode but of the whole troop. Slowly they moved forward, exactly like a herd of oxen being driven home from pasture. Every now and again one of the troop would stop, pluck a handful of herbage with his trunk, thrust it down his mouth and begin to chew. At first I stood right in the way of the troop, armed with my camera, but when the great animals bore down upon me discretion got the better of valour, and I hastily retired to a safer position on the outskirts. As a matter of fact, I think that these intelligent animals would be as fearful of treading upon a human being as is the latter of being trodden upon. The keepers who marched beside the troop took not the slightest notice of elephants behind or

alongside, but marched indifferently onward, and the animals that were in closest proximity to these men halted and shrank back or forced themselves into the general mass, in order to avoid the possibility of in any way harming their masters.

We followed the great mammals to the river, where they were compelled to take a bath. It was an amusing sight to witness. The elephants are evidently not too fond of cold water, and the keepers had to encourage them by shouts and by gentle application of the *chicote* (or *sjambok*) to immerse their cumbrous bodies in the muddy stream. To see these thirty-five huge animals in the river, some only knee-deep, some up to the belly, and a few with only head and shoulders above water, was a unique sight. Occasionally one of the animals would think that he had had about enough, and would attempt to leave the water. Then the keepers and bystanders would seek, by shouting and gesticulating, by vigorous strokes of the lash and well-directed volleys of clods, to drive him back to his tub. Some of the elephants were so accustomed to the daily programme that they simply lay down in the water forthwith and proceeded to enjoy themselves. Others stood in the stream, drew the liquid into their capacious trunks and then squirted it over their bodies in a refreshing shower. A few belonged to the obstreperous order, and refused to enter the water bodily, contenting themselves with standing at the edge of the stream and wallowing like pigs in the mire. It was a very late hour of the day when these proceedings took place, but the sun which had been obscured almost all day by dense masses of cloud, broke through towards evening and allowed me to take a few snapshots of the scene.

After the evening bath was over, the herd was conducted to the corral. This was a space enclosed by stalls on two sides, a high wall on another, and a fence of tall stakes on the remaining side. A plentiful supply of sweet grass and a few turnips were assigned to each animal, in order to allay the pangs of hunger during the watches of the night, which must seem very long to animals that are accustomed to spend it in foraging. During the day the elephants are at pasture, or they may be harnessed in order to make roads, construct dams, and plough and harrow fields. I do not suppose that they are overworked, for there is not much to do at this remote spot, and thirty-five elephants represent a great amount of

energy to do it with. It is a pity that these animals are not distributed to those centres where large reproductive works are in progress, so that one could learn whether they really possess a sufficiently high economical value to make it worth while capturing and training them.

M. Mayette is an exceedingly interesting personality. He spoke only French, so that our conversation sometimes fell upon quicksands and shallows. But what he told me of his experiences as elephant hunter and elephant tamer was in every way remarkable. He has had no previous training in this business, but armed with the work of an English writer (whose name I have forgotten) on the hunting and domestication of elephants, he has set to work here in the wilds of Congoland, and the thirty-five tame animals at Api are the monument of his patience and enterprise. He described to me the *modus operandi* when they wished to secure young animals. At a certain season of the year he and his native assistants would enter the forest, and gradually approach and surround a herd in which there were several young. Chains and powerful cables are held in readiness. At a given signal they close in upon the herd. A general stampede is the immediate result, and the pursuers have to exercise the utmost care not to be trampled under foot by the alarmed troop in its mad flight. The course of the young elephants is observed, and they are rapidly followed, while the older animals are permitted to escape. Then the young are seized by the trunk and the ears, and secured with chains. Once caught it is a comparatively easy task to convey them to the station, where they soon find themselves quite at home among the previously domesticated animals. To my question whether they had ever attempted to capture and tame the adult elephant, M. Mayette replied, 'Not yet.' He does not seem to think that there is any particular danger associated with this exciting work, and invited me to join him on his next hunt. Looking back at this very generous offer, I feel sorry that I could not accept it, and perhaps earn imperishable renown by shooting a huge tusker, but on the other hand I should feel still more sorry if a huge tusker had trampled me to death; so perhaps it is as well that I could plead the exigencies of travel, and so save my face, and incidentally, perhaps, my life.

I also questioned M. Mayette concerning that rare and

AZANDE MURAL DECORATION
Native hunters

AZANDE MURAL DECORATION
European (on horseback) and European lady

curious animal the *okapi*, that stands midway between the zebra and the giraffe. We have only got to know of the existence of this strange animal during the present century, and the discovery is due to Sir Harry Johnston. In 1900 the latter sent to Dr. Sclater of the South Kensington Museum two strips of skin, which that naturalist assigned to an unknown species of zebra, but which were subsequently found to belong to an animal that was closely allied to the giraffe family, and received the name of *Okapia Johnstoni*. There are one or two Europeans who claim to have seen this wary creature, but no white man has thus far shot a specimen. Captain Gosling of the Boyd Alexander expedition succeeded after great trouble in getting the skin of a male okapi; and Dr. Schubotz of the Mecklenburg expedition describes how, after he had himself fruitlessly scoured the woods for a sight of the animal, a famous native hunter, Etumbamingi, secured two for him. The animal, it must be acknowledged, is sufficiently difficult of approach. When I asked M. Mayette whether he had ever seen the okapi, he replied, 'Frequently.' If I have understood him rightly, then he is one of the very few Europeans who have sighted living specimens of this animal. He also told me that a native chief who lives in the centre of the okapi area had offered to catch a living animal for the Government, provided the latter would give him in exchange a gun, powder and caps, and a box of beads (or something of similar value: I forget the exact demand made), but the Government declined the offer. This M. Mayette thought very foolish, and so indeed do I, for a living okapi would be a treasure for which any zoological garden would pay a large price.

# CHAPTER XIII

## TOWARDS LAKE ALBERT

Ah, but the way is long!
Years they have been in the wild!
Sore thirst plagues them: the rocks,
Rising all round, overawe;
Factions divide them; their host
Threatens to break, to dissolve.

Then in such hour of need
Of your fainting, dispirited race,
Beacons of hope, ye appear!
Languor is not in your heart,
Weakness is not in your word,
Weariness not on your brow.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

### *Poor Carriers*

A FOUR days' march from Api brought me to Bambili, a Government post of more than ordinary importance, situated at the confluence of the Bomakandi and Welle rivers. Here I was detained other four days, waiting for carriers. I understood that the Welle was open from this point and upwards as far as Niangara, but I was assured that in the present swollen state of the river a voyage by canoe would be a tedious and toilsome affair. Accordingly I decided to follow the trail, and set out on the 3rd September on the ten days' march to Niangara. My carriers were a poor lot of Ababua, feeble, spiritless, and dilatory, and I experienced the greatest difficulty in getting and keeping them on the move. One man was such a laggard that, after he had tried my patience for a whole morning, I discharged him contumeliously, and substituted one of my hammock-men. These carriers had a nasty trick of turning aside to a village concealed in the forest and known only to themselves, and spending the best part of the morning there, leaving me waiting ten or twelve miles further on for a lunch-basket which would not turn up.

Now if there is anything that human nature finds it hard to endure it is having to wait for a meal, and in this respect I am exceedingly human. So I determined to put a stop to these roadside defections. Next morning I placed my cook at the head of the procession, with instructions to march slowly and to see that no one got ahead of him. Then came the twenty carriers, loads on head. In the extreme rear I marched, with my personal boy Suli, to whom was entrusted the duty of rounding up possible deserters. In spite of our vigilance, however, seven men escaped and plunged into the bush, leaving their loads lying. I sent out a scouting-party to discover their whereabouts and bring them back, but it was an hour before they were found and threatened or cajoled into shouldering their burdens again. Then the worthy cook came to me with a worried expression upon his fat, round face, and begged leave to resign the onerous office of acting as leader to the caravan. 'I no be fit look dem man proper' was his plea. What with insubordination in the ranks and incapacity in the officers, the system of order and discipline which I had tried to introduce crumbled like a pie-crust. At Amadi, four days out from Bambili, I secured a fresh relay of porters, belonging to the Barambo tribe, with vastly improved results, both for our general progress and for my particular temper.

A little to the east of Bambili the aspect of the country begins to undergo a change. Forests are less frequent, and tall grass becomes more abundant. On the 6th September I note in my diary: 'Long walk through high grass—very monotonous. Then some small forests, growing round rivulets that flow north into the Welle. Finally a more populous part, with banana and palm groves, through which our broad road winds its way. Many mimosas seen to-day. In the distant east appears a blue hill—quite a sight for sore eyes, that for weeks and weeks have gazed on nothing but the dull, dark green of the forest. A cloudless morning, then a dense fog, then a fine day, and finally the gathering of the clouds which presage the customary afternoon downpour.' This undulatory style of country continued as we trekked eastwards, until it became merged in the hills and mountains which mark the divide between the basins of the Congo and the Nile. The scenery was decidedly pretty, and reminded me of the grass-covered hills of Natal and Zululand, though

the trees were larger and the forests denser. The road was firm and sandy, and as it lay open to the sky it was soon dry even after the heaviest fall of rain. My progress from day to day would have been pleasure unalloyed, were it not that I suffered so continuously over this stage from repeated attacks of malaria.

### *The Mangbetu—a Fine Race*

The tribes which I met in this portion of North Congoland are the Ababua, the Barambo, the Bakongo, and the Mangbetu. Further to the east, in the neighbourhood of Lake Albert, are the Lugware, the Logo, and the Aluru. The most notable of these are the Mangbetu, who deserve a fuller description than I can afford to bestow upon the others. The Mangbetu are the tribe with the greatest prestige in the regions of the Upper Welle. The original Mangbetu were a tribe of conquerors from the west, who imposed their language and customs upon the peoples whom they subdued. Many of those who call themselves Mangbetu to-day have probably small right to the name. The real Mangbetu are less black in colour than their neighbours, and deviate pretty widely from the negro type of feature, some having almost aquiline noses. Schweinfurth, who visited them in 1870, and was the first to give a precise description of their manner of life, describes them as unmitigated cannibals. 'The cannibalism of the Monbuttoo is the most pronounced of all the known nations of Africa. Surrounded as they are by a number of people who are blacker than themselves, and who, being inferior to them in culture, are consequently held in great contempt, they have just the opportunity which they want for carrying on expeditions of war and plunder, which result in the acquisition of a booty that is especially coveted by them, consisting as it does of human flesh. The carcases of all who fall in battle are distributed upon the battlefield, and are prepared by drying for transport to the homes of the conquerors. They drive their prisoners before them without remorse, as butchers would drive sheep to the shambles, and these are only reserved to fall victims, on a later day, to their horrible and sickening greediness' (*Heart of Africa*, ii. 42). The Government of the Congo Belge has of course exerted itself to put down the revolting practice, and with complete success; for I find no reference to cannibalistic feasts in later

travellers, and I observed nothing myself that could give colour to the accusation that they still feed on human flesh.

In dress the Mangbetu do not greatly differ from the tribes that surround them. The men have a piece of cloth around the loins, or they wear a sort of corset made of the bark of a tree—a very clumsy and uncomfortable garment, though approved by ancient custom. Upon their heads they carry a small square cap made of straw, and shaped like a biretta, which suits them well and adds an air of distinction to a community that plumes itself on possessing a higher culture than its plebeian neighbours. The women tie a cord round the waist, from which depend, in front, a piece of bark-cloth, twenty by twelve inches in size, and behind, a round mat of pleated banana-leaf, ten inches in diameter, which is worn not for ornament but for utility, as a sort of improvised camp-stool upon which they can deposit themselves when they have occasion to sit down. In both sexes the ears are perforated, not with a hole, but with a huge aperture that removes nearly the half of the ear.

The women do not wear the straw cap which the men affect, but pay the greater attention to their coiffure. They comb back the hair in an upward slope, so that it forms a huge castellated structure on the top of the head. The resemblance to a castle or turret is enhanced by the parapet which surrounds the summit; and inside of this parapet is a hollow space which takes the place of the reticule of a society lady. In it the Mangbetu dame keeps her comb, her snuff-box, her string of beads, and suchlike *articles de toilette*. I need hardly say that it also affords harbourage to various diminutive creatures belonging to the *pulices* and the *pediculi*, which I need not futher particularise; and the Mangbetu lady's headdress is not complete without the addition of an ivory rod, ten inches long and of the thickness of a lead-pencil, with which she can relieve the irritation of the head without endangering the safety of the structure that crowns it.

The most extraordinary custom that I found in vogue among the Mangbetu is that of headbinding. We know something of the footbinding which is practised by the Chinese lady of rank. Among the Mangbetu the head of an infant is substituted for the foot of a lady as *corpus vile* for the binding experiments. On a day I saw in the midst of the crowd that surges round the white man when he arrives at a native

settlement a boy of about seven years of age, who possessed a head of a strange oblong shape. I looked at him curiously, and said to myself, 'What a shape for a cranium! You must take a photo of this.' But soon I saw another with the same peculiarity, and then yet another; and at once I remembered what I had read about the artificially elongated heads of the Mangbetu children. This then was the explanation: the curious heads I saw were not *lusus naturæ*, but the product of fashion and tribal custom. When the Mangbetu child—a boy or girl—is but a month old, its head is tightly bandaged, from just above the eyebrows to the top of the skull, with strips of cloth three inches wide. These bandages remain in position for at least a year, with the result that the plastic head of the infant, in which the cranial bones are still quite pliable, assumes the distorted shape which I saw before me in the lads of five and seven. In boys of that age, naturally, the head has resumed something of its original appearance; but in infants the forehead is pressed flat, the eyes bulge, and the crown of the head, when the child stands perfectly erect, projects far beyond the plane of the back and the buttocks. I have caught myself wondering whether this unnatural distortion of the head affects the brain of the Mangbetu. Apparently not; for they are one of the most intelligent tribes in North Congoland. But I have been assured that the pressure exercised upon the forehead renders the eyes more exposed to the vertical rays of a tropical sun than they would otherwise be, with the consequence that eye troubles are more frequent among the Mangbetu than among neighbouring tribes.

In arts and crafts the Mangbetu compare well with other African peoples. They are primarily agriculturists, and occupy a singularly well-watered and fruitful province that lies at the headwaters of the Bomokandi and Kibali (*i.e.* Welle) rivers. Their pots and kitchen utensils are in many cases real works of art, that not only assume various shapes but are also adorned with original devices in red and white. They are skilled in wood-carving, which they exhibit in the little seats they make and in the handles of their spears and knives. The men also have considerable skill in iron-smelting and the women in weaving hats, mats, baskets, and other articles that can be made from grass or banana-leaf. The huts which they build are of the usual circular shape, with a

MANGBETU WOMEN, WITH CHARACTERISTIC COIFFURE

high pointed roof, and are kept scrupulously clean; while some of the greater chiefs of the Mangbetu erect public buildings of great size which are not without some pretensions to architecture. Like the Azande they possess artistic talent to a remarkable degree, and their representations both of natives and of white men are extremely realistic.

### *Mission Work on the Welle*

By the commencement of September 1914, I had been travelling for five months without passing a single Protestant mission station, or meeting a single Protestant missionary. Are there then no missions of any kind between Nigeria and North Congoland? None whatever, until one reaches the Ubangi. On that river, a few miles east of Fort de Possel, there is a work of the Roman Catholic 'Fathers of the Holy Ghost,' called the Mission de Sainte Famille, which has been in existence for sixteen or more years. Passing eastwards we find the Roman Catholics again at Banzyville, where the order of the Capuchins has established itself. Still further to the east, on the upper reaches of the Welle, the Dominicans are found at three stations. As is their custom everywhere, the Catholics immediately set about beautifying the sites they occupy. They build commodious houses, plant gardens, commence industries, make roads, and finally erect a stately church. At Amadi the Dominicans have put up a fine edifice in Gothic style, with stained-glass windows and an imposing tower. No doubt such a station is impressive, but does it impress the native in the right way? Does it not give him the idea of a religion of aloofness, to be looked upon and revered from a distance, but never to be appropriated? Does he not regard it as a system of worship suitable for the white man, but to which he, the poor benighted heathen, never can aspire? These are not criticisms; they are merely questions which suggest themselves. Perhaps they represent the different outlook of the Protestant and the Catholic, the divergent conception of the Church which each holds, and the divergent aims and methods which underlie their missionary activities.

When I arrived at Bambili I learnt to my surprise and pleasure that there was a Protestant missionary there, the Rev. William Haas, who had come out to Africa in connection

with the Africa Inland Mission. It was a great joy to have spiritual communion with a like-minded brother in Christ, after so many months of solitude and isolation. Mr. Haas, who hails from the States, gave me a mass of valuable information about roads and distances, and ways and means, and tribes and tongues, from Bambili to Lake Albert; since it was from the east that he had entered the country. He listened, too, very eagerly to the accounts I gave of the peoples lying to the west, and I have since learnt that he has moved away from Bambili to Semio on the Mbomu River, in an effort to reach the remoter portions of the Azande tribe. I trust that he will be able to carry out his project to visit the unevangelised portions of the Central Sudan; though I fear that without the support afforded by a strong home base and an adequate organisation, he cannot hope to establish a mission that has the promise of permanence.

At Niangara, one hundred and thirty miles to the east of Bambili, I met Mr. C. T. Studd, of the newly established 'Heart-of-Africa Mission.' Before he left London in 1913 I had tried to gain some idea of the region in which he desired to settle, but his own knowledge of the country was then still somewhat vague, and I entered upon my journey not knowing where to look for the Heart-of-Africa Mission. What was my delight when Mr. Haas told me that Mr. Studd was to be found at Niangara, a place which I must needs pass on my way to Lake Albert. Mr. Studd, I discovered, had not adhered to his original idea of working among the Azande, who lie to the north of the Welle River, but had been making exploratory trips to the south, and has since secured concessions of sites at Nala and elsewhere among the Mangbetu and contiguous tribes.

Some sixty miles further to the east lies Dungu, a Belgian *poste*, where the Africa Inland Mission (British Branch) has opened a station. The same Mission has another station at Mahagi, on Lake Albert; and to it must accordingly be given the honour of being the first Protestant Mission to open work in North-east Congoland. The Church Missionary Society, it is true, had several out-stations on the western shores of Lake Albert and across the Semliki River some years before the advent of the A.I.M., but the latter was the first to place European (*i.e.* American) missionaries on the further side of the Lake. The missionaries along the Upper Welle are faced

MANGBETU BOYS (HINDMOST SHOWING ARTIFICIALLY DEFORMED HEAD)

with the problem that looms so large in all parts of the Belgian Congo—I mean the problem of language. Every tribe has its own tongue, and the burning question of the day is whether it is possible to find a common denominator of Bantu speech in the Congo basin which shall become the common simplified language of all the peoples that dwell in this vast territory. On this matter I shall have more to say at a later stage. In the meantime, the officials all over the Colony, as well as the handful of missionaries on the Upper Welle, are making use of the Bangalla—a trade language in vogue all along the main Congo, and along every other tributary and stream where Congo trade has forced a way.

### *Approaching the Nile Basin*

After leaving Niangara the traveller finds himself, for the most part, in a savannah country. There are patches of forest, and the plain is dotted with mimosas, mopani and occasional kigelias, but the wayside trees which cast their grateful shade across the path have disappeared, and the caravan marches along with no protection against the scorching sun. During our tour, fortunately, the heavens were frequently overcast, and a gentle breeze from the east was seldom absent, so that in spite of insidious malarial onsets I made good progress. The rains were now at their height, and the country was flooded. When nearing Dungu our road lay submerged at one point for a distance of nearly half a mile. I reclined in my hammock in a state of tension and anxiety, for at any moment my bearers might stumble and precipitate me into the water. Happily they were both strong and cautious, and no mishap took place. When we reached the Kibali River, which is the Welle under another name, and saw the *poste* of Dungu lying on the further bank, it seemed as if there were small chance of getting across. The river was level with its banks, two or three hundred yards in breadth, and rushing by like a mill-race. To a tree that grew on the water's edge was moored a huge canoe, and in this bottom it was proposed to convey us across the flood. There seemed to me to be more chance of our being swept down to the Atlantic, than of touching the further bank. However, I committed myself to the unwieldy craft. In some respects it is

a great convenience not to be able to converse with the native in his own language. Had I command of his speech, imagine the remonstrances, the anxious questionings, the replies that would excite rather than allay trepidation. By cherishing no doubts, asking no awkward questions, and committing myself in calm confidence to whatever means of transit offered, I won safely through serious situations which, had I comprehended all the dangers they involved, might have struck me nerveless. Our canoe hugged the bank and slowly worked its way for some distance upstream. Then it was swiftly put about; the full force of the current struck it on the side, and I thought for a moment that it would dip and fill. But our expert paddlers knew what they were about. Driven forward by their mighty strokes the canoe shot into midstream with the velocity of a torpedo, and within a few seconds glided into the quiet backwater of the northern bank.

Ninety miles separate Dungu from Faradje, and the road is a gradual though imperceptible ascent. We have now left the forest region finally behind. The eye roams over grassy plains, bounded in the far east by low hills. If there is anything more monotonous in African travel than the road between Dungu and Faradje, I hope I may never meet it. Mile after mile, hour after hour, you tramp between two walls of ten-foot grass, a blank sky above you, and before you an endless road that stretches with a wavy up-and-down motion to the skyline. The only relief to the dull monotony is afforded by the sight of fresh elephant spoor, which advises us that the great beasts are in our immediate vicinity, and may at any moment emerge from the concealment of the giant herbage and bear down upon us.

As we reached higher altitudes, I succeeded in shaking off the last traces of malaria, which had lain upon me since the end of July. New blood now surged in my veins, new vigour animated my frame, new courage filled my heart, and I faced my day's march with an elation to which for months I had been a stranger. The weather became progressively pleasanter. Hot days and sultry nights were a thing of the past. The mornings, at times, were positively cool, and the days were never oppressively warm. Generally the sky was overclouded. Day opened with the sky a uniform grey. Then a single level bar of light would show against the opaque back-

A REACH OF THE UPPER WELLE

ground. Presently the sun rose, though still invisible, and soon the opacity became transparent in patches. But still the silent struggle between light and darkness, between heat and moisture, goes on. At length rifts show in the dense cloud-masses; they widen and broaden, the blue gaining steadily on the black, until half the heavens show clear. The moisture-carriers then decide to give up the unequal contest, and as obstinately as they contended with the rising sun at the first, so pusillanimously do they now make their surrender. By eleven o'clock the last vestige of filmy cloud has been dissipated, and the sun is blazing in true tropical splendour.

Faradje lies at an altitude of two thousand four hundred feet above sea-level, and the traveller feels, as he looks across the broad undulating plains that stretch to west and south, that he is in a different climate to that of the low-lying, breezeless, forest-girdled Niangara. Four days' march to the east of Faradje is the frontier-post of Aba, that lies on the watershed between the Nile and the Congo systems, and forms the gateway leading from Southern Egypt to the Belgian Congo. My road, however, did not conduct me to Aba and the Nile. At Faradje I diverged from the route followed by Boyd Alexander and Schubotz, and turning southward to the recently established *poste* of Aru, situated almost on the British border, at a distance of one hundred and fifteen miles from Faradje, pursued a steady course for Mahagi, at the north-west corner of Lake Albert. The scenery is very different in type to what we have seen in the Welle basin, and becomes grander as we proceed. After the savannahs, the hills, with frequent mimosas and occasional euphorbias; after the hills, bare granite kopjes, with a rough road and many steep climbs and precipitous descents; after the kopjes, great bare mountains, with forest (and very little of that) only in the deep dales; and after the mountains, the summit of the divide, consisting of ridge upon ridge and hill upon hill, all of approximately the same height above sea-level, but separated from each other by deep gullies, at the bottom of which lurk almost impassable morasses. Such is the difficult country which we have to traverse; but the toil and difficulty of the journey are alleviated by the magnificent mountain air which fills the lungs with pure oxygen and the heart with pure joy.

### *An Unofficial Route*

Another ninety miles lie between Aru and the shores of Lake Albert, and though the distance is not great the road is toilsome. When I left Aru the *chef de poste* accompanied me for a short way, and as he took my hand at parting said, '*Vous savez, ce n'est pas une route officielle.*' This seemed to me at the time to be a polite but superfluous apology, for I started on a broad open path that promised delightful travelling. Alas! at the end of two miles the open road ceased, and for the remaining eighty-eight miles we were cast upon a narrow streak of mountain pathway that was sometimes visible, and sometimes wholly concealed by the rank grass. At times the path would suddenly broaden into a ten-foot road, and we congratulated ourselves that our struggles with the obstructing herbage were over; but we suddenly rounded a corner and were brought up standing by a wall of grass eight feet high, and nearly as dense as a haystack. These bits of cleared pathway were merely an indication that the Government proposed, at some future date, to open a regular avenue of communication between Aru and Mahagi, but just now '*Vous savez, ce n'est pas une route officielle.*'

Let others say what they will, but I confess that for my own part, walking through wet grass is one of the amenities of African travel with which I can most readily dispense. On a broad highway it requires merely a little *finesse* to avoid the elephant grass that lies athwart your path, laden with moisture in every stalk and blade. But when the track is nine inches wide there is no escape. Before you have gone a hundred yards you are as sodden in the lower extremities as though you had waded through a river; and with wet, clinging garments and squelching boots you march steadily on, until it pleases the sun to break through the enveloping haze and dry first the moist grass, and then your moist clothing. Even when the rank growth is perfectly dry, you are not in much better estate. The grass, at the time of year when we traversed this region, had attained its maximum length. Heavy dews and incessant rains had altered its slope from the vertical to the oblique, so that it lay across our path, forming a harassing impediment to rapid progress. 'Boring through the long grass' is an expression for which Mr. Dan Crawford holds the patent, and nothing can more accurately

describe our advance. Even when the grass does not lie prostrate athwart the path, it curves gracefully over till the sharp-pointed seeds hang just at the height of your face. You have then to march, it may be for miles, with your indispensable walking-stick held at arm's length horizontally before you; and you find yourself muttering, '*Vous savez, ce n'est pas une route officielle.*'

In addition to the entangling grass, we had to cope with numerous malodorous morasses. Now, to stop at every one and divest yourself of boots and stockings would entail too great a waste of precious time; and I confess that I am not sufficiently hardened to plunge booted and puttied into the black mire. I relied upon two trusty men, who bore my hammock for no other purpose, to convey me safely across. But my confidence was utterly misplaced, for at the very first marsh one of the bearers lost his footing, and I dropped, hammock and all, into the midst of the mud and the mire. My first act on reaching solid ground was to give my unhappy hammock-man his *congé*, and to load the now useless hammock upon the remaining carrier. At the next morass I called Suli and said, 'Now, Suli, you must carry me over; but look you well, if you drop me, you 'll catch it,' and I shook my stick menacingly in his face. Nothing daunted, the courageous Suli arched his back, and I mounted on to his shoulders. He carried me with uncomplaining fortitude through rivers and marshes innumerable, and not once did a drop of moisture wet, or a speck of mud soil me. Sometimes a heavy strain was cast upon my willing Christopher, but he responded right nobly. There were times when I felt him sinking beneath me in what appeared to be bottomless mire, and I heard him groan as if he were in great pain. Then I would say, 'Must I get down, Suli?' for little as I liked the prospect, still less did I like losing my boy. 'No, sir!' he gasped, and I sat tight. Then, with a superhuman effort, this muscular African would heave first one leg and then the other out of the treacherous morass, and bear me safe to land. And when I had escaped the clutch of this foul fiend for the fifth time, I would remind myself, with a smothered laugh, that '*Vous savez, ce n'est pas une route officielle.*'

The *Lugware* porters with whom I had to content myself were, of all the porters who served me in Africa, the feeblest, the most unintelligent, and the most unclothed. The *chef*

*de poste* at Aru had thoughtfully told off a brace of *askari* (native police) to accompany me as far as Mahagi, partly as guides, partly as protectors, and partly as custodians of my string of carriers. In the first capacity they were poor, in the second they were worthless, but in the third they were indispensable. They carried guns of a very ancient pattern, and they may for all I know have been able to use them, did they possess any cartridges, blank or otherwise. But ammunition they had none. As weapons of defence, then, these guns were about as dangerous as an infant's toy, but the moral influence which they exercised, especially when reinforced by the blue tunics of the men who shouldered them, was incalculable. Unlike the porters previously mentioned my present squad, wisely concluding that it was better to hang together than to hang separately, stuck to each other like swarming bees. Poor fellows they were, too, poor in intelligence, poor in physique, miserably poor in dress. I should think that a pocket-handkerchief summed up the total amount of cloth which covered the bodies of those nineteen carriers. Three or four of them had a string tied round the waist; the rest had not a vestige of clothing or ornament, although two of them—the Rockefellers of the party, I suppose—had a small bag of native flour under the left shoulder. The native carrier elsewhere almost invariably provides himself with a small mat woven of soft grass, and this is his couch at night; but these primitive men lay down to sleep round a feeble fire of sticks, with nothing but bare earth below and dewy heaven above. The force of nakedness and poverty can no further go.

### *An Unexpected Meeting in the Wilderness*

One afternoon I descried a tent pitched upon a lofty hill towards the south. 'White people!' I said to my two henchmen. Now, to encounter white men in this vast wilderness is by no means an everyday occurrence, but an event that must be chronicled in red letters. When it appears, moreover, that the strangers are not the ordinary trader or the ubiquitous hunter, but missionaries, the pleasure of the meeting is immeasurably enhanced. And when you finally discover that there are ladies of the party, while you cannot remember to have looked upon a female face for six months,

NATIVE SUSPENSION BRIDGES OVER THE KIBALI (UPPER WELLE)

then your joy and pleasure know no bounds. This experience befell me on the 5th October 1914, a day which is marked with several red crosses in my mind and memory. The friends whose acquaintance I now made were the Rev. Charles Hurlburt, Director of the Africa Inland Mission, his daughter, Miss Alta Hurlburt, and Miss Morse, who is a Licentiate of the College of Physicians and Surgeons. For four days we travelled in company, and certainly there were few days which passed so enjoyably as these, despite obstreperous grass, obnoxious bogs, precipitous mountains and unwelcome showers.

Mr. Hurlburt had been visiting Dungu in his capacity as Director, and the two ladies had elected to accompany him—his daughter to provide the comfort necessary on such a long *safari*, and Dr. Morse because the state of Mr. Hurlburt's health was such as to cause anxiety. I have described above some of the difficulties with which I had to contend on my journey from Aru to Mahagi. I now found that these same difficulties were faced and successfully overcome by a gentleman who is much my senior and by two young ladies who are far less inured to hardship than I am. To see this trio climbing the steep mountains, painfully struggling with the refractory grass, bedewed with moisture, bedrenched with rain, bedaubed with mud, and enduring all the discomforts and privations of the march, not merely with unmurmuring patience but with positive exhilaration—why, it was a stern rebuke to discontent and a standing pattern for admiration. Let who will think otherwise, I maintain that the true heroes and heroines of our day are not the Pearys, the Scotts and the Shackletons, who set about discovering the North Pole and the South Pole, and who either lose their lives outright in the quest, or return home to honours, dignities and wealth—but the missionaries, both men and women, who from year's end to year's end, and sometimes for long periods at a time, undertake toilsome journeys, settle on remote and isolated stations, dwell in tiny huts with few or none of the comforts to which civilisation has accustomed them, and submit to all the privations inseparable from this existence, without the least prospect of being crowned with laurels, and without even the guerdon of being accorded 'honourable mention' in the columns of the daily press. These, however, are the people to whom I take off my hat.

On the fourth day after our fortunate *rencontre* we were toiling up the steep slope that leads to the A.I.M. station on Gasengo Hill. Here a warm welcome awaited Mr. Hurlburt and his two companions, and an equal share was extended to me as a member, for the nonce, of that select circle. Mr. and Mrs. Stauffacher, Americans, and three English ladies, were the staff at the time of my visit. We are here at an elevation of five thousand seven hundred feet above the sea, situated upon a mountain that commands an uninterrupted view to all points of the compass. Few stations in Africa can boast of such a wide and glorious outlook. Towards the north we look across a billowy surface that represents the mountainous region through which we have struggled to gain this vantage-ground. On the west the horizon is shut off by a high range that rears itself aloft not more than a mile or two from where we stand. On the east and south stretch the smooth placid waters of Lake Albert, on the further side of which we can distinguish the hills of Uganda. Far away, beyond the furthest south of the lake, we once descried, on a cloudless afternoon, the great mass of Ruwenzori, with its head buried in the mists. The view is magnificent and unique. The masses of mountain, piled one upon the other, like Ossa on Pelion; the glittering mirror of the lake, three thousand feet below; and the kaleidoscopic clouds, with their varying degrees of light and shade, from fleecy white to lowering black, their fantastic shapes, like forms of giant phantoms, and their swift fairy-like motion—all unite to make a picture that captivated my imagination, and after the lapse of eighteen months still hangs undimmed in the chambers of memory.

The Africa Inland Mission, as its name implies, has for its object the evangelisation of the far interior. It is in its origin an American society, founded by one Peter Cameron Scott, who was cut down by fever after a course of but a year and a half in British East Africa. For twenty years the chief control of the Mission has been in the hands of Mr. Hurlburt, as Field Director. With him I had many long and profitable discussions on objects and methods, on men and means, on tribes and mission fields, and on the great unevangelised interior that appeals so pathetically for the light of God's gospel, and the redeeming power of God's grace. The stations of this Mission lie scattered in three different territories, under three different flags—in British East Africa, German East Africa, and the

WAYSIDE RESTS—IN A NATIVE VILLAGE

WAYSIDE RESTS—AT A ROCKY STREAM

Belgian Congo. The workers are partly Americans and partly British. The basis upon which the society reposes is voluntary; no religious test is demanded, no ecclesiastical organisation is acknowledged, and the workers are required to subscribe to no confession or creed. No salary is guaranteed to any member of the staff, and the Mission therefore belongs to the class of 'faith missions,' of which the China Inland Mission is the most notable example. The A.I.M. now counts more than seventy workers, who are settled at about fifteen stations. Two councils, one in the States and one in England, direct the general policy of the Mission, and are trustees for the properties acquired in the mission field. The Africa Inland Mission also belongs to the federation of Protestant missionary societies, that is identified with the now well-known name of Kikuyu. This Mission, then, deserves our hearty good wishes and our fervent prayers, for it has its gaze fixed steadfastly on the 'regions beyond,' and is doing its utmost to reach forth to the countless tribes that lie hidden in the inaccessible interior of our Dark Continent.

# CHAPTER XIV

## THE NILE AND ITS RESERVOIRS

Nihil est quod noscere malim,
Quam fluvii causas per saecula tanta latentes,
Ignotumque caput: spes sit mihi certa videndi
Niliacos fontes, bellum civile relinquam.

'Julius Caesar'
in LUCAN'S *Pharsalia*.

### *A Story of Discovery*

THE origin of the Nile has been the mystery of the ages. Abraham, in the grey dawn of history, pitched his tent on the banks of the *Ye'or* (the 'river' *par excellence*), marvelled at the stupendous pyramids, gazed upon the Sphinx with its eternal riddle, and bathed, no doubt, in the waters of the sacred stream, but whence those waters flowed he knew not. Joseph, regent of Upper and Lower Egypt, acknowledged the dependence of his adopted country upon the fertilising Nile flood, but of its remote sources, beyond the trackless desert, he had no knowledge. Moses by divine command punished the recalcitrant Egyptians, by turning their cherished river to blood, but though he was instructed in all the wisdom of Egypt, no ancient record over which he pored, and no learned priest whom he consulted, could throw light on this dark riddle—the origin of the mighty, mysterious stream.

Down to the commencement of the Christian era, speculations were rife as to the course and probable origin of the Nile, but reliable information was slight. Historians like Herodotus, philosophers like Aristotle, geographers like Eratosthenes and Strabo, and potentates like Juba, King of Mauretania, busied themselves in constructing theories as to the hidden sources of the river, without greatly furthering the cause of geographical knowledge. The last-named writer gave to the world an elaborate but wholly fabulous account of the supposed underground course which the Nile ran for several days' journey, until it reached a lake which showed characteristic

Nile fauna, whence it flowed for twenty days' journey more to the confines of Ethiopia, and so down to the ocean.

The celebrated geographer, Ptolemy of Alexandria, writing about the middle of the second century of our era, tells us all that was known or guessed at concerning the Nile sources up to that time. It is not much, but it is remarkably prophetic of the findings of modern exploration. Two different streams, he says, issuing from two lakes lying to the south of the Equator, unite to form the Nile; and these lakes are fed from the snows of a range of mountains running in easterly and westerly direction, which are known as the Mountains of the Moon (*Lunæ Montes*). This is a really striking foreshadowing of the discoveries which were completed seventeen centuries after Ptolemy wrote. The two lakes may be identified with those two great reservoirs of the Nile, the Victoria Nyanza and the Albert Nyanza; and the *Lunæ Montes* are represented by the snow-capped Ruwenzori range.

In modern days interest in the Nile problem was first stimulated by the journeys of James Bruce, who visited Abyssinia, and traced the course of the Blue Nile. The missionaries Krapf and Rebmann, stationed on the east coast at Mombasa, discovered those lofty mountains Kilimanjaro and Kenia, and also reported that the natives affirmed the existence of a great inland sea in the direction where the sources of the Nile were supposed to lie. The Nile problem was by this time the most burning geographical question before the scientific world. In attempting to solve it, a race of great explorers sprang up, whose names are written imperishably upon the pages of African discovery. John Hanning Speke was the first to reach the shores of Lake Victoria from the south. Travelling northward, he arrived at the Ripon Falls, where the Victoria Nile issues from the lake, on the 28th July 1862. Though prevented by hostile natives from following the course of the stream, he nevertheless reached the main river, at a point to the north of Lake Albert, and made his way overland to Gondokoro. The problem was solved; the main source of the waters of the ancient Nile had been discovered: it now but remained to fill in details.

The exploratory work of Speke was supplemented by Sir Samuel Baker, who, accompanied by his courageous Hungarian wife, forced his way up the river, in the face of strong opposition on the part of the Arab slave-dealers, and dis-

covered Lake Albert. The greatest of all African explorers, Henry M. Stanley, commenced his career of discovery in 1874, when he set out to find the lost Dr. Livingstone. At a much later date he discovered Lake Edward and the mighty range of Ruwenzori, that towers to a height of seventeen thousand feet above sea-level. With this discovery, and the identification to a great degree of probability of Ruwenzori with the fabled Mountains of the Moon, the riddle of the Nile sources was finally resolved, and the river is now known to have a total length, from the headwaters of the Kagera, to the west of Lake Victoria, down to the delta at the Mediterranean coast, of not less than four thousand miles. It is therefore the second longest river in the world, falling short by less than two hundred miles of the total course run by the Mississippi-Missouri. I make no apology for inflicting the above little geographical excursus on my readers. It will enable them to understand the connection which subsists between the two Nyanzas, Victoria and Albert, and the reason why these two lakes are called 'the reservoirs of the Nile.'

### *The Back-door of Uganda*

To resume the story of my journey—leaving Gasengo Hill after four pleasant days with the friends there, I descended to the lake shore, in the hope of finding a steamer to take me across to Uganda. There was most fortunately a comfortable rest-house, for I had to spend twelve days at this spot before a boat was found that could take us over the lake. This time of enforced detention I spent, not unprofitably, I hope, in bringing up to date the account of my wanderings which I was writing for my Dutch friends in South Africa. Towards the end of my stay I was joined by Mr. and Mrs. Stauffacher, who were proceeding on furlough to America, and we journeyed very happily in company as far as Jinja, on the Victoria Nyanza. The view from the verandah of the rest-house was very impressive. We gazed across the smooth glitter of the lake to the low range of mountains on the eastern shore. When the haze lifted we could distinctly discern the course of the Nile, a thread of silver lying across a black plain, from the spot where it dashes through the barrier of mountains as the Murchison Cataracts, to the place where it glides sluggishly into the lake; and then, nearer at hand towards the

THE RIPON FALLS—THE NILE ISSUING FROM VICTORIA NYANZA

west, we saw it leave the lake and enter the long, long channel which conducts its waters down to Egypt and the Mediterranean. There were not many craft plying on its placid surface. Sleep-sickness regulations have put an end to intercourse between the Belgian and the British shore, except such as is under the direct control of the authorities of the 'Albert Marine.' Only by the grace of these powers may you cross from the one shore to the other, which explains why we had to lie at Mahagi for ten days, waiting vainly for relief and deliverance from the eastern side.

The two 'boys' whom I had brought with me from Nigeria caused me, on the whole, very little anxiety. On one or two occasions I had to rebuke them for small misdemeanours, and once at least Kuku came in for corporal chastisement; but they were the only constant factor in my changing retinue of porters, they were the only individuals with whom I could hold even a limited intercourse, and I became in course of time very much attached to them. It therefore gave me great concern when, on the evening of my arrival at the lake, I discovered that Kuku was not among the men who had carried my loads. What had become of him? As we were descending the precipitous mountain on which the Gasengo Mission lies, I noticed that he seemed weak and feverish, and made but poor progress. Still, this was a matter of not infrequent occurrence, and I made sure that he would soon stumble into camp, where at any rate he would have ample time to recuperate. When darkness fell and no Kuku, I said to his companion, 'No doubt Kuku will have reached a wayside village and have decided to spend the night there.' And so we went to bed. But when the missing boy had not turned up at nine the next morning, my anxiety rose. I armed Suli with some food and a drop of stimulant, and despatched him in search of the absent one. 'Perhaps,' I said, 'he is lying sick and untended in some little village, or even in the tall grass.' I would have organised a search party of natives but for the fact that I could unfortunately not make myself understood.

At two o'clock that afternoon Suli returned, saying that he could find no trace of the missing lad. I was now seriously alarmed, and decided to return immediately to Gasengo station, and call in the aid of Mr. Stauffacher and his personal boys. (Mr. Stauffacher, I must premise, had not yet joined

me at the lake). So very early on the third morning I started for Gasengo. The distance is fifteen miles, the mountain is nearly three thousand feet above the lake, the path is rough and overgrown, the sun was hot, and the latitude two degrees north. I need hardly say that it was a strenuous climb. But anxiety drove me onwards and upwards without pause. In a trifle over five hours I was knocking at Mr. Stauffacher's door and inquiring for news of Kuku. They knew nothing about the boy. 'Then,' I said, 'he is hopelessly lost, and we must send men in every direction to hunt for him.' In half an hour's time six men were speeding over the hills to north and east and south. At 3 P.M. they returned, accompanied by one of the native police from Mahagi, who handed me a note indited by Suli in the Hausa speech, which contained the brief announcement, 'Kuku has returned.' It was an immense relief. I remained over the night with the hospitable friends at Gasengo, and started back for the shore early next day. For the third time in four days I traversed the steep mountain-path between Gasengo and the lake, and every winding of the tortuous track is impressed upon my memory. I found the boy who had been lost looking thin and worn. He said that during three days he had eaten nothing, that he had missed the way and travelled far to the north, and that he was compelled to hire a guide at the prohibitive price of trousers, knife and mug. Poor fellow! I soon indemnified him for his losses, glad to have recovered him at any price.

We made good our escape from Mahagi in a sailing-boat, whose name (if it ever had one) I have forgotten. It was an old tub of a vessel, and my companions cannot look back on that passage with feelings of very lively delight. As a matter of fact they were all wretchedly ill, and looked at me with eyes full of reproach and aversion, when I ventured to fry a little meat, wishing my breakfast at the bottom of the lake, where theirs had already gone. Towards evening we arrived at the British shore, landing at Butiaba, which is the headquarters of the lake flotilla. Butiaba is situated on a spit of sand that projects for a couple of miles into the lake. It is hot, low-lying and mosquito-ridden, and is certainly an ideal place to escape from with what celerity you can. The coast must be very poorly equipped with harbours if this is the best they can find. For Butiaba is a place of some importance.

THE VICTORIA NYANZA AT JINJA

It is the exit for travellers passing from Uganda to the Belgian Congo, or proceeding down the Nile to Gondokoro and Khartum. Once a fortnight the *Samuel Baker* or some smaller steamboat runs to Nimule on the Nile, a distance of over one hundred and fifty miles, and at the same intervals there is communication with Kasenge on the Belgian side, which is the port of disembarkation for the Kilo gold-mines.

The British Government is less considerate of the needs and comfort of travellers than the Belgian. Directly we passed to British soil there was an almost complete absence of the rest-houses which are found at every stage on the Belgian roads. At Butiaba no accommodation of any kind is provided, and we were obliged to pitch our tents upon the sand, where a thunderstorm or a gale of wind would have laid them flat. Our detention at this inhospitable place was fortunately brief. We arrived on a Saturday and shook the sand of Butiaba from our feet at an impossibly early hour on the following Tuesday. A march of seven miles, culminating in a stiff climb up the so-called 'escarpment,' carried us to the point where the highway commenced, and a motor-trolley waited to pick us up and jolt us, at the rate of seven miles per hour, to Masindi, fifty miles away. We were now fairly in Uganda. About this protectorate of the British Empire volumes have been written. Indeed, considering their youth, none of the British colonies have received half the attention, from travellers and hunters, from publicists and Government officials, that has been bestowed on British East Africa and Uganda. Every month sees new additions to the library of books that has sprung up around these magic names. There is therefore the less call for me to devote many descriptive pages to these territories, and I shall accordingly skim them lightly, and merely draw attention to the matters which possessed interest for myself.

### *At the Nile Source*

The motor-trolley which passes Masindi carries the traveller to Masindi Port on Lake Kioga, which is really no lake, but merely the broadening out of the waters of the Nile over a flat and marshy plain. From here we have a waterway to Namasagali, which in its turn is connected with Jinja, on Lake Victoria, by a railway sixty miles long. At Jinja, then, our

immediate objective, we arrived on the 3rd November, only to be met with the disappointing intelligence that the steamer for Kampala had sailed ninety minutes before. This entailed, for me at least, a wait of fifteen days, and several attacks of malaria. There was no place to pitch our tents but on a grassy slope near the lake shore, where there was neither tree nor house nor shed, to act as shelter against the rays of the sun; and as Jinja lies almost precisely on the Equator, the reader will appreciate the extent of the deprivation.

Jinja itself is far from being an uninteresting place. The Ripon Falls lay an easy fifteen minutes' walk from where my tent was pitched. What recollections came surging into my mind as I gazed upon the rushing waters, and listened to their roar! I recalled the long search for the sources. I pictured Speke standing rapt and speechless at these falls, which marked for him the consummation of his enterprise. I imagined his deep sigh of relief, of hopes attained, and of ambitions realised, and the exultation with which he sat down to pen the words: 'The expedition has now performed its functions. I see that old Father Nile without any doubt rises in the Victoria Nyanza, and that, as I foretold, this lake is the great source of the holy river, which cradled the first expounder of our religious belief.' And for myself, I experienced the same feelings and sentiments as animated Speke. For I too was a discoverer of the source of the Nile. It mattered not that hundreds, and it may be thousands, of white men had looked upon these falls since Speke's day, so that I was not the first, nor the second, nor the hundredth to discover them. A discoverer I was, as surely as Speke and Stanley, Columbus and Cook; as surely as Keats, 'when first looking into Chapman's *Homer*'—

> Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
> When a new planet swims into his ken;
> Or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes
> He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
> Looked at each other with a wild surmise—
> Silent upon a peak in Darien.

There is a good deal of picturesqueness about the falls themselves. They are not very high, nor do the somewhat low banks of the river set them off to advantage; but the great volume of rushing water, the numerous islets which dot the surface of the stream below, the hippos which occasionally

thrust their preposterous heads above water, the huge fish which show so distinct in the limpid pools, and the countless flocks of wild duck that cover every rock and tree-stump, combine to make a picture that holds the imagination.

Other associations than those which are purely scientific and exploratory attach to Jinja. I was informed one day that the C.M.S. had a work in the vicinity, presided over by a European. Upon him I called. His name, he told me, was Hannington.

'Are you any relation to Bishop Hannington?' I asked.

'His son,' was the reply.

I shook hands with him reverentially, as though I were greeting the dead Bishop himself, and asked him to indicate to me the site of his father's martyrdom.

'Over there,' he said, pointing across an arm of the lake, 'about fifteen miles away.'

I thought of James Hannington—the cheerful, the humorous, the determined, I had nearly added, *the rash*. I recalled his trying experiences on his march to the lake. I remembered the last terrible days as a prisoner of Luba's, when he was tortured by thirst and fever, weakened by hunger, and rent by apprehension and uncertainty. I heard again his dying message, 'Tell Mwanga that I have bought the road to the Baganda with my blood.' And I rejoiced to think that Hannington's son should be avenging his father's death in such noble fashion as I now witnessed.

### *Kampala—Commercial Capital of Uganda*

It was the 19th November 1914 when I finally reached Kampala, after a journey, from the Niger to the Nyanza, of eight and a half months. Here accumulated correspondence from the south had to be examined and answered, business transacted, a great Mission studied, and sundry places of interest explored; and I found three weeks none too long for such a lengthy programme. The kindness which I received at the hands of Bishop Willis, the Rev. Ernest Millar, and many others, has made me their debtor for life. Under the genial guidance of Mr. Millar I was able to visit all the sites of Kampala, so crowded with historical interest—the spot where stood Alexander Mackay's first house, the scene of the early martyrdoms, the crowning-place of the Baganda kings,

and the tomb of Mtesa and Mwanga. Seated at a window of Bishop Willis's residence on Namirembe hill, with the unrivalled outlook it commands in every direction, I immersed myself in literature describing the early years of the Mission, and strove to visualise the scenes, pathetic or stirring, that represent its inspiring history. For Kampala, which includes Mengo and Namirembe, is the epitome and crown of Ugandan history; and Uganda is the crown and glory of African missions.

Like ancient Rome, Kampala is built upon seven hills, which, when viewed from the administrative and commercial quarter, appear to lie in a semicircle. There is first Nakasero, upon which we stand—the business centre, sloping down to a valley down which the little railway winds its way to Port Bell on the lake shore; then there is Kampala, site of the former 'Fort' Kampala, and seat of the administration before it was moved to Entebbe; next, the two elevations which go under the general name of Namirembe, the one crowned with the residence of Bishop Willis, and the other destined for the new immense cathedral planned to seat seven thousand people, of which only the foundation is complete; next in order, Mengo, the royal hill, where dwell the Kabaka, or king, the Katikiro, or prime minister, and other exalted Ugandan officials; behind Mengo lies the Rubaga hill, on the summit of which are the buildings of the Roman Catholics (White Fathers); and further eastward the Mill Hill Mission (English Roman Catholics) occupies the slopes of the hill called Chibuye. The landscape is characteristic of Ugandan scenery, consisting as it does of an endless succession of hills, clad from foot to summit with banana groves and not very tall forest, interspersed with broad undulating valleys, at the bottom of which we sometimes see sheets of gleaming water, and always meet treacherous and impassable swamps. In the neighbourhood of Kampala, and along the avenues of trade and travel, these swamps have been bridged by raised highways, but in the remoter parts of the country they remain one of the chief hindrances with which the traveller has to cope.

Since the opening up of Uganda and British East Africa, these countries have undergone marked social and economic changes, which must exercise a profound influence upon their future development. In Kampala, Jinja, Port Florence, and

all other townships in these protectorates, the population exhibits three distinct strata, each of which, naturally, has many gradations. The upper stratum consists of the Europeans, under which name I include, of course, South Africans and Americans. This is the ruling and controlling factor in the community, and consists of administrative officers, merchants and traders, colonists and settlers, and missionaries. The middle stratum is composed of Indians, who are either Hindus or Mohammedans in religion, and have quite monopolised the retail trade of the country. I met not a single Jew in 'British East' or Uganda, nor do I think that the Israelite could here earn a living, much less amass a fortune, for these Indians can give points to the sharpest Jew alive. The Goanese merchants stand at the head of the Indian community; they speak excellent English, ride about in motor-cars, and serve on municipal boards. At every railway station you see an Indian station-master, in all the glory of white uniform and stately turban. He is a man in authority and he knows it. When one of these dignitaries requests you, in his bland and even voice, to kindly take your seat, you are overcome with the honour done you, and are fain to salaam to the ground and cry, 'O king, live for ever.' It is a far cry from the pompous official to the coolie with his waistcloth, who sits at the corner of the road, exposing for sale his stock of black bananas and juiceless oranges. But they belong to the same race, and only stand at different poles. The surplus population of India has found an open door in East Africa, and the only question now is whether the Indian will not sooner or later, and sooner rather than later, completely swamp the indigenous African.

The third stratum of the East African community consists of the native himself, belonging to many different tribes, and still for the most part sunk in heathenism. Only one tribe, which from the commencement possessed a higher degree of culture than the surrounding peoples, has largely accepted Christianity—I mean, of course, the Baganda. Next to them, but a long way behind, come the Ba-toro who also have responded to Christian influence; the king of the tribe, David Kasagama, being a staunch supporter of his church. There are many other tribes in the Uganda Protectorate where Christian missions are making healthy progress; and the Church Missionary Society is so thoroughly alive to its respon-

sibilities, that other Protestant missions have voluntarily decided not to enter the Uganda field, but to leave it to the body that first occupied it, and has been so signally blessed of God in its endeavours to carry the Gospel.

There are distinct signs that the Mohammedan prestige, which in the days of Mtesa was exceedingly powerful, is steadily crumbling. This is unhesitatingly ascribed to the spread of Christian education. One of the missionaries of the C.M.S. gives the following testimony:

'Eight years ago Entebbe was a centre for the spread of Islam. There is no such centre in the whole of Uganda to-day, and if the Church is faithful there never will be again. I do not think there was a single compound then where the head servant was not a Swahili and a Mohammedan missionary. Hardly any one would employ a Muganda in any position of the least responsibility. Now nearly all the office boys and servants, and a growing number of clerks, are Baganda; and the great majority are Christians—at least in name. It is largely due to the training in our schools, both intellectual and moral, that the Christians have been able to change their social position. But the point most interesting to us is that the prestige of the Swahili language, which was always used to spread Islam, has been broken' (*C.M.S. Report*, 1913).

### *In Praise of the C.M.S.*

Much as I would like to do so, space does not permit of my entering upon a full description of the Uganda Mission. No greater praise can be awarded to it than to call it the model mission of Africa. The noble army of men who laid its foundations and guided its destinies, the inspiring example of its early martyrs, the baptism of fire through which the Church of Uganda passed, and the enthusiasm and energy with which its converts are spreading the faith once for all delivered to the saints, unite to place the Uganda Mission in the foremost rank of missions in the Dark Continent. Were there no other fruit than this Mission to show for a century of toil and prayers, the existence of the 'Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East' would be richly justified. If I were asked what there is in the methods of the C.M.S. that is specially characteristic, and to which, under God, the success of their efforts may be ascribed, I should mention three things:

1. The large place that educational effort occupies in their scheme of work. By this I mean not secular, but religious education, though at a later stage secular instruction becomes increasingly important. It was to instruction that Mackay gave his time and strength. It was with a view to instruction that Pilkington mastered the language, translated the Bible, and engaged in unwearied literary labours till his premature death. The earliest Christians were known as 'readers,' and readers the Christians have remained to this day. Writing in 1907 Bishop Tucker said: 'It is safe to say that during the last decade at least a quarter of a million of persons—men, women and children—have been taught the elements of reading, writing and arithmetic. Next to the purely spiritual power exerted by the preaching of the Gospel, perhaps the greatest force which in recent years has influenced and impressed the life of the Baganda has been that of education—education in its widest and deepest meaning.'

2. I was impressed, secondly, with the large part—the commanding part, in fact—which the native agency plays in spreading the Gospel. The number of African clergymen and lay agents reported for 1912 was 2800, among whom were more than forty ordained men. When it was proposed to enter the Bukedi and Teso districts, Bishop Tucker appealed for volunteers from among the young Christians of Uganda. Within a short time eighty-five had responded. Pagan districts were entered, the banner of the Cross was securely planted, and another barrier was erected against the approaching wave of Mohammedanism. 'With such native stuff to work with,' cries one enthusiastic missionary, 'what might not be accomplished! The land from the Nile to Abyssinia lies open to us. Surely the Church at home will not let the opportunity pass by!'

3. The great principle of self-support of the native agents by the native Church has been faithfully carried out in Uganda. The resolute adherence to this principle is, no doubt, responsible for much of the stability and spiritual prosperity of the Uganda Church. 'Not a single halfpenny of English money is used in the support of either clergy, lay readers, or teachers.' The only exception to this rule was made in the case of the young men sent as evangelists to Bukedi and Teso, who were supported by funds from the Pan-Anglican Thank-Offering. 'The Church of Uganda,' said Bishop Tucker with perfect

justice, 'could not be expected to evangelise the whole of Africa, and why should not outside assistance be rendered without a violation of the principle of self-support?'

For the work of the C.M.S. in Uganda (and elsewhere) we may well praise God. As an example of 'what God hath wrought' it has been an encouragement and inspiration to thousands. It is a model of missionary method, it is a pattern of missionary activity and consecration, and it is a prophecy of missionary success among those tribes of Africa that to-day still lie bound in affliction and iron.

GRAVE OF MRS. KRAPF, WITH MOMBASA IN THE DISTANCE

# CHAPTER XV

## THROUGH BRITISH EAST AFRICA

What do we know of the city's scorn, the hum of a world amaze,
Hotfoot haste and fevered dawn, and forgotten yesterdays?
For men may strain and women may strive in busier lands to-day,
But the pace of the ox is the pace to thrive in the land of veld and vlei.

The song of the ships is far to hear, the hum of the world is dead,
And lotus-life in a drowsy year our benison instead—
Why should we push the world along, live in a world of flame,
When the pace of the ox is steady and strong, and the end is just the same.

CULLEN GOULDSBURY.

### *Across Plains and Mountains*

EARLY in December 1914 I resumed my journey from Kampala, with the intention of making a rapid tour through British East Africa, down to the coast at Mombasa, and paying a brief visit on the return journey to my fellow-Boers settled on the Uasin Gishu plateau, near Mount Elgon. Originally my programme included a trip to German East Africa, but the outbreak of war made necessary a considerable modification of my plans. I could no longer hope to reach Lake Tanganyika, as I had purposed, by the easy method of booking by train at Dar-es-Salaam for Ujiji, and I was compelled to reconstruct my programme so as to include an overland journey from Kampala to Toro (at the foot of Ruwenzori), and a *trek* via Lakes Albert Edward and Kivu. The route was longer and more toilsome, but there would be compensations, I hoped.

British East Africa, as viewed from the railway, is for the most part a lofty plateau, varying in altitude from five thousand to eight thousand feet, the surface of which is cut in two by a tremendous cleft in the crust of the earth, that goes by the name of 'the Great Rift Valley.' This valley runs in a northerly and southerly direction, has for its floor a fairly level plain, in which there are frequent lakes, and is shut in by stern and lofty walls of rock, known as 'escarpments,' that rise to two thousand and three thousand feet

above the plain. This remarkable fissure in the surface of the continent is due to volcanic action in a geological period long past, as is proved by the presence of several extinct volcanoes, and by the generally volcanic nature of the soil. The railway from the lake to Mombasa traverses the rift-valley between the Mau escarpment on the west and the Kikuyu escarpment on the east, and the traveller is therefore able to study this mighty cleavage, and to view from his carriage window ancient craters like Meningai, Longonot and Suswa.

The total length of the railroad miscalled the 'Uganda Railway,' from Port Florence on the lake to Mombasa on the Indian Ocean, is just on six hundred miles. About halfway lies Nairobi, the administrative centre of the protectorate, at a height of about five thousand five hundred feet above sea-level. Nairobi is almost entitled to be called a city, and would, I think, fully deserve the appellation were it supplied with electric light and electric trams. As it is, it possesses fine large stores, filled with every variety of European goods, which are sold at an advance of thirty-three and a third per cent. upon, let us say, Cape Town prices. The standard of value is the rupee, fifteen of which make a sovereign; and the rupee is the East African shilling. To find the price of any object, turn the ordinary Cape Town shillings into the East African rupees, and there you are. Simple, but expensive! In addition to warehouses, Nairobi boasts two daily papers, three printing establishments, four or five comfortable modern hotels, and the usual superfluity of bars. Can there be any doubt that it takes rank as a civilised city? On a Sunday which I spent here I found my way to a little church on the outskirts of the town. A young clergyman of the Church of Scotland, be-gowned and be-hooded, delivered a sermon, which I greatly enjoyed, in connection with the Advent-season. There was a good attendance with a fair sprinkling of ladies. Apparently the ubiquitous Scot forms a not inconsiderable element in the population, which consists roughly of twenty thousand individuals, one-twentieth European, one-fourth Asiatic, and the rest African.

### *Mombasa*

The railway journey from Nairobi to Mombasa takes twenty hours. The contrast between both places is marked.

Nairobi lies upon a broad plain; Mombasa on an island. Nairobi has an elevation of five thousand five hundred feet; Mombasa is at the sea level. Nairobi is cool, at nights even cold; Mombasa is hot as an oven. Nairobi is modern, wide-awake, feverishly busy; Mombasa is mediæval, lifeless and unenterprising. Nairobi boasts broad, straight and dusty streets; the main street of Mombasa is ten feet wide, straighter than a corkscrew, but not as straight as a rainbow, with three-storied, funny-windowed houses, whose roofs try to kiss each other, and mighty brass-bound doors that suggest subterranean vaults, pale and emaciated prisoners, and all the horrors of slavery.

'Who constructed these great doors, with their huge copper bosses?' I asked of an intelligent Indian who was passing by.

'Vasco da Gama,' was the reply.

'And yonder high yellow prison or castle—who built that?'

'Vasco da Gama.'

'And that curious little white cupola, that looks as if it once covered the mouth of a well?'

'Vasco da Gama.'

How much more famous a famous man can become by the simple effluxion of time. Good old Vasco da Gama, skilful sailor and intrepid explorer, called at Mombasa on his first voyage to India at the close of the fifteenth century, and the fort which now dominates the town was only put up a century and a half later, but he gets all the credit and its real builder is lost in oblivion.

For one coming fresh from the highlands of the interior Mombasa is not a place to invite a lengthy stay. At Kilindini port there are faint signs of life, but the rest of Mombasa is absolutely inert. I visited the harbour. A few unwieldy Arab *dhows* lay at anchor, and a number of smaller craft moved silently to the ebb and flow of the water, but no sail was visible in the offing and no boat sped across the quiet bay. With Mr. Wright of the C.M.S. as cicerone, I visited Frere Town on the mainland, distant some thirty minutes by boat. This station, intended originally as a refuge for liberated slaves, was founded at the instance of Sir Bartle Frere, one time governor of the Cape, and thus bears his name. Though the circumstances which gave occasion for its establishment have long since passed away, the property remains in the hands of the Church Mission, and educational

and industrial work are still being carried on. The long, low building, yellow with age, which housed the freed slaves, is still standing, one or two of the rooms being in use as carpenters' shops. The population in the vicinity is small. We looked in at the school—a roomy building, thinly occupied by little groups of pale and silent children, who gave whispered answers to the questions addressed them. Everything seemed to be under the influence of the prevailing listlessness. There was no bright chatter, no gusts of joyful laughter, no exuberant scamper over the green carpet of grass. Occasionally I caught sight of forms moving among the trees. They may have been natives clothed in white, bearing messages or proceeding to their daily avocations; but to me they seemed mere phantoms, so silently did they flit in and out between the tree-trunks. They were, I feel sure, the Lotos-eaters,

> Who sat them down upon the yellow sand,
> Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
> And sweet it was to dream. . . . But evermore
> Most weary seemed the sea, weary the oar,
> Weary the wandering fields of barren foam,
> That all at once they sang, 'We will no longer roam.'

Within twenty-four hours of my arrival I took a glad departure from Mombasa. It was Friday the 18th December 1914, and it is due to the reader that I should write in bold letters, *Here commenceth the second crossing.* For it was at this point that I embarked on my second transcontinental journey. The total number of miles traversed between Lagos on the Atlantic seaboard and Mombasa on the Indian Ocean was four thousand nine hundred and seven, and the time occupied in accomplishing it was ten and a half months. The second crossing, as we shall see, took but half the time.

### *The Game of the Plains*

Who has not heard of the game of British East Africa? I remember reading (*magno cum grano salis*) of the countless herds of wild animals that danced and pranced about the train as it puffed its way over the broad plain, or obstructed the track and had to be frightened away by the shrill whistle of the locomotive. 'Gross exaggeration,' I thought. But, reader, 'tis true! The Athi plains, that stretch southward from Nairobi, are literally covered with herds of game—

game of all kinds and of all sizes, from the tall camelopard with its ungainly trot, to the graceful, nimble steenbok. When I tell you that the Government has, most well and most wisely, proclaimed this region as a game reserve, you will understand why in this second decade of the twentieth century you may still look out of your carriage window and see, in the course of a short forenoon, no less than ten or eleven different kinds of African game animals. The train steams through immense plains, bounded in the dim distance by a range of shadowy mountains. Except in the deep hollows and along the water-courses no tree or shrub is visible. As far as the eye ranges, you perceive animals grazing in the short grass. They might be the cattle of the Masai, or the goats and sheep of the Kikuyu, so quiet are they, so wholly indifferent to the passage of the snorting monster across their preserves. But presently a curve of the iron track brings you within fifty yards of a herd, and you have your first view, at close quarters, of the far-famed game of Africa.

You see the striped zebra and the high-withered hartebeest consorting together, for though much wider apart in the zoological scale than Jew and Samaritan, there is far less mutual antipathy between them than between those two Semitic races. You see great troops of Thomson's gazelle, graceful creatures that are known familiarly all through British East Africa as *Tommies*. These antelopes roam and frolic in the immediate vicinity of the train, and honour us with little more than an inquiring gaze that seems to say, 'What is the matter to-day, that you go tearing and roaring across the prairie?'

At a somewhat greater distance, say at about three hundred yards, you notice the more timid animals. I observed the wildebeest, with his shaggy mane and suspicious air; the lesser kudu, with long, spiral horns; the speedy ostrich, scouring the plain with outstretched wing; the unsightly warthog, grubbing for sweet roots; Grant's gazelle, with long, lyre-shaped horns, out of all proportion to its slight body; the startled steenbok; and the lanky giraffe, grazing amid the mimosas. Is there another railway in the world from which you can behold an equal variety of game animals? This sight alone makes the journey from Mombasa to Nairobi absolutely unique. I was told that at times lions have been seen from the train windows, and I can quite believe it. No

one who has read Colonel Paterson's thrilling book *The Man-eaters of Tsavo*, can experience any difficulty in peopling these plains with large numbers of the king of beasts. At Tsavo, one of the stations on the line, in the days when the railway was under construction, the progress of the work was stopped by the midnight attacks of a couple of marauding lions. I was exceedingly anxious to photograph the antelopes we passed, but we sped along without pause or retard at thirty miles an hour, and no convenient breakdown afforded me the opportunity I sought. Next time I shall make friends with a ganger and travel on a trolley.

### *Missions and Trekkers*

My stay in British East Africa was so brief that I could make, to my regret, only the most superficial acquaintance with the many missions that are at work. I visited, of course, Kikuyu, that place which has acquired such surpassing historical interest, and which, to the mind of many of us, is set for a fall or rising again, for a chief cornerstone or for a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence. Apart from its historical associations, I was happy in getting a first-hand insight into the work and methods of our Scottish friends of the Established Church. As in everything which the North Briton undertakes, thoroughness is the keynote which is struck first and struck firmly. I am sorry that I could only turn aside to tarry for a night at Kikuyu. I saw, nevertheless, the church (in which the Conference was held that has made history), the school, the hospital, with wards for both women and men, the workshops and the gardens. Kikuyu lies at an altitude of 6700 feet, and though we were but very little south of the Equator, the air at night was so keen that I was glad to see a cheerful fire blazing on the hearth. Here it is a curious fact that gives to ponder: the missionaries of the Church of Scotland in this mission-field are almost all celibates. In the whole history of the Mission, so Mr. Barlow informed me, there have been only two married couples and one baby. I am afraid to think of the heavy responsibility that devolves upon this one baby to sustain and carry forward the missionary tradition.

Halfway down the eastern wall of the Great Rift Valley, on a ridge of the mountain, lies Kijabe, the headquarters of

the Africa Inland Mission. The view from here is unequalled. The station buildings occupy a somewhat steep slope, which is covered with a grove of trees, among which I noticed many olives. Pleasant shady walks connect the different dwelling-houses with each other. From under the spreading branches we obtain long-distance views across the valley, which lies shimmering in the hot sunshine. Yonder we see the huge bulk of Longonot, the crater on whose summit, one mile in diameter, is partly discernible; and further away up the valley Suswa rears its hazy head. Time was when the Masai roamed over this plain with their numerous herds of cattle, but the encroachments of European settlers have driven them further afield in the search for water and pasture. It was the original intention of the missionaries of the A.I.M. to labour among this interesting tribe, but since the Masai have moved off, and it is manifestly impossible to break up the station and follow these nomads of the desert, the missionaries have turned their attention to the Wa-kikuyu, who, being agriculturists, lead a more settled existence. An important undertaking of the A.I.M. is the school for white children, which was started by the missionaries primarily for their own children, but of which many European settlers have been glad to avail themselves.

Travelling still northward and westward, I arrived at Londiani station two days before Christmas. It was my intention to visit the Uasin Gishu plateau, where most of the Boer trekkers from South Africa have settled. Some one kindly told me that Londiani was the station at which I must disembark from the train. But how was I to reach my countrymen, whose homes lay sixty or seventy miles from the railway line? The question was answered in a very remarkable way. One evening, at a station where we were enjoying an evening meal, a gentleman came up to me, and addressing me in Dutch said, 'Now tell me who I am; for you know me very well.' I peered into his face, groped up and down the halls of memory, and finally said, 'You are Jan Dry.' 'Quite right,' he answered, and shook my hand vigorously. He was a member of the congregation to which I ministered in the Orange Free State in the days before the Boer War, and I had not set eyes on him for more than sixteen years. What a glad meeting it was, thus to light upon an old friend in a land of strangers. Mr. Dry at once arranged to fetch me

with his cart and horses at Londiani station; and when I descended from the train on the 23rd December, my friend was waiting for me, and we accomplished our sixty miles before nightfall.

The Uasin Gishu plateau, where the Boers have selected their farms, is the loftiest and therefore also the healthiest part of British East Africa, lying at an altitude of eight thousand feet above the sea. Its surface consists of rolling plains, covered with short herbage, but for the most part treeless, except on the slopes which lead up to the plateau, and in the sheltered hollows where the violent winds that sweep the uplands are hardly felt. In such spots are still to be found extensive forests of indigenous cedars, the wood of which is of great value for building purposes, since it withstands the ravages of the white ants. Upon the plateau proper there are considerable herds of zebra, hartebeest, oribi and other antelopes, which I am afraid are not destined to survive much longer, for the Boers are good shots and greatly addicted to game-flesh.

The plateau is bounded on the north by deep valleys which separate it, on the north-east from Mount Elgon, and on the north-west from the Chibcharagnani range. In the forests that skirt these valleys a good deal of big game still survives, and I found myself in the footsteps of Colonel Roosevelt, for I had much intercourse with Messrs. Mouton and Jordaan, who are mentioned on page 347 of *African Game Trails*. I had unfortunately no time to go hunting lions, like Roosevelt, or buffaloes, as Jordaan proposed doing on the day of my departure; and therefore I packed my portmanteau on to the time-honoured ox-wagon, and commenced the return journey from Sergoi to Londiani.

### *A Defunct Race*

The plateau of Uasin Gishu is also of considerable archæological interest. Though there are no native tribes in occupation, signs are not wanting that the population in a former age was numerous and wealthy in cattle. All over the plateau there are round hollows, from twenty to thirty feet in diameter, which represent the semi-subterranean dwellings of former inhabitants. The first to observe these remains was Joseph Thomson, who says in *Through Masai Land* (1885): 'Before

reaching camp I had been much struck by a curious circular wall of earth with openings here and there. It has a surprising resemblance to a Roman encampment, sufficient, indeed, to have called forth from antiquarians with more enthusiasm than brains a learned treatise on the evidence of the Romans having been there. On inquiry I learned that it had been a Masai kraal, the houses having been built of stone and mud, owing to the difficulty of obtaining the necessary wood to build the regulation huts. They must have been mere heaps of stone and earth, with holes in the centre, which in the inclement weather could be covered with bullocks' hides, and the inhabitants must have sat in them like birds in their nests—only with a very great deal more discomfort. Now they only appear as a circle of earthworks.'

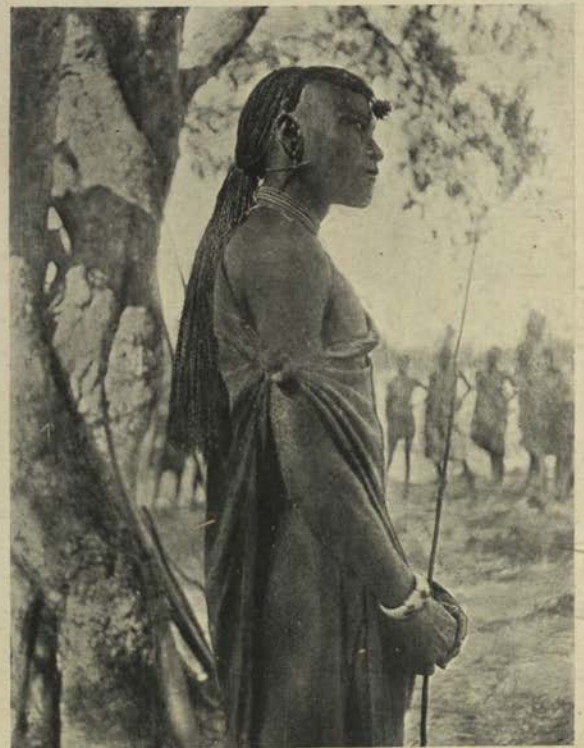
I am not an antiquarian, whether of the enthusiastic or the brainy variety, and all I would venture to do is to add a few data, from personal observation, to Thomson's description. These dwellings must have had a much greater depth beneath the surface than they show at present, but with the lapse of years the depressions have filled up. In many places I found trees of considerable height growing inside the circle of earth and stones, and in almost every case there was thick undergrowth; so that it seems to me that the evacuation of these homes by their builders is not of very recent date. In some places, and noticeably on the farm of Mr. Dry, a low entrance was found, made of neatly piled stones, with a large flat rock across the top as lintel; and from this entrance a short passage, twelve or fifteen feet long, led to the dwelling itself. The circular space which forms the remains of the house was frequently connected by a narrow pathway with another circle of earth and stones representing, I suppose, the cattle-pen. This second circle also surrounds a depression, so that I conclude that the cattle-fold, as well as the dwelling-house and the connecting path, was roofed over with stout poles, as a defence both against the weather and the assaults of wild beasts.

I wish to lay some emphasis on the fact, which does not appear from Thomson's statement, that these ancient dwellings are found not merely here and there, but all over the Uasin Gishu. Looking across the plain, one sees in every direction the characteristic clumps of undergrowth and tall grass, which indicate the position of the circular hollows:

And along the rocky ridges we find under almost every group of trees the piles of stones which mark the site of old doorways. Thomson takes it for granted that these remains belong to the Masai occupation, and Sir Charles Eliot, in the introduction to Hollis's authoritative work on the Masai, states: 'It is quite probable that there was a large agricultural settlement [of Masai] on the Uasin Gishu plateau, from which the more adventurous warriors detached themselves.' From what I could ascertain by interrogating local legends I should think that the people who occupied the plateau were the Wa-kwafi, originally a branch of the great Masai nation, who in their migrations southward a century or more ago, settled in these grassy uplands. In course of time they became embroiled with the Masai proper, and a series of wars arose. The Masai were victorious, and subdued first one and then the other of the clans which ventured to oppose them. In about 1870 matters came to a crisis between them and the Wa-kwafi. The Masai carried their struggle with the latter right on to the plateau, swept it from north to south, and left not a man alive in the whole region; those who escaped the spear and the sword finding refuge among the Kavirondo. Thus Thomson. The only discrepancy which I find hard to argue away is the manifest antiquity of the remains, which must, I think, go back much further than 1870, especially since the most careful search has failed hitherto to unearth any utensils, weapons or broken pottery.

A discovery which I made about six miles south of Sergoi hill stands probably in some connection with the problem of the former occupants of the Uasin Gishu. To the east of the wagon-road, at a distance of about a hundred yards, I found an oval arrangement of stones, suggestive of the elliptical temple at Zimbabwe. The stones form an ellipse of which the long diameter is approximately two hundred and fifty feet, and the short diameter one hundred and fifty feet in length, the former diameter lying almost exactly east and west, and the latter south and north, so that the orientation of the enclosed area is sufficiently striking. At the north-west side there are two fairly large stones five feet high, but the remainder are not more than two or three feet above the present surface, and show no signs of having been cut, or in any way prepared before being placed in position. From the middle of the northern side to the south-western corner lies

AZANDE WITCH-DOCTOR
(Belgian Congo)



ELGEYO MAN WITH ARTIFICIAL TRESSES
(British East Africa)

a row of stones, the purpose of which is not apparent. There are indications of entrances at the eastern and western extremities, as well as at the southern, but on the north side the row of stones has been interrupted by encroaching ant-heaps, so that it is difficult to predicate anything with certainty. The south-west side contains the largest stones, and it is here that the elliptical course of the wall is most distinctly visible. The floor of the plain is ironstone, which is also the composition of the stones, and the surface slopes down to a stream of fresh water that flows fifty yards away on the south side.

### *From Uasin Gishu to Uganda*

My stay among my fellow South Africans drew to a close. I had spent a happy, busy fortnight with them, and had partaken of their boundless hospitality. I had conducted services for them, on Christmas Day, on New Year's Day, on the last Sunday of the old year, and on the first of the new. And now the time was come to bid them adieu. They sent me away laden with good wishes and good things, and for many weeks to come I was still eating the *biltong* and the *boerbeschuit* (dried meat and biscuits) with which my kind friends enriched me.

The return journey to Londiani station was accomplished by ox-wagon. I wonder if any previous traveller through Africa has made use of as many means of locomotion as I. By water I travelled on ocean steamers (between West African ports), river steamers, barges and canoes; on land I had the railway, the motor-trolley, the motor-cycle, the bicycle, the ricksha, and the machila (hammock); the ox-wagon, the ox-cart, the Cape cart and horses, the horse, the mule, and the donkey. No camels were available so far south as my travels lay, and a tame elephant was a luxury beyond my means. Excluding these I think I have pretty well exhausted the means of transport in Africa. Which is the best and which the worst of these transit agencies is a matter of taste. If you ask me where I place ox-wagon travelling, I would answer —well, I shall have to whisper this in your ear, for I cannot bear to offend Oom Piet, who lent me his wagon and Oom Paul, who supplied eight yoke of oxen—I would be compelled to answer, *Near the bottom.* The ox-wagon, you must know, is a vehicle without springs. When I have said that, I have

said all—to the intelligent reader, at least. On the smooth stream, or on the breezy billow we can dispense with springs. Everywhere else they are indispensable. Who would sleep on a bed without springs? Who would, by preference, sit on a sofa without springs? And, *a fortiori*, who would ride in a wagon without springs? Only the man or woman whose spinal cord is out of joint and whose nerves are in abeyance. But if the telegraphic communication between the extremities of your limbs and the centre of your brain is still unimpaired, then, reader, avoid the ox-wagon of the Boer farmer as you would avoid the rack of the Spanish inquisitor. The only occasion when I found the ox-wagon even slightly tolerable was when I travelled through the Great Thirst Desert of the Kalahari eight years ago. The surface was sandy, and for miles and miles the wagon ploughed through a road as soft and yielding as the dry seashore. *That* I could endure; but travelling by this primitive conveyance over the primitive roads of British East Africa is an experience which I think would be very salutary for *you*, especially if you are a bilious subject, but which *I* shall take very good care not to repeat.

A five hours' run from Londiani landed me at Port Florence, otherwise known as Kisumu, the lake port from which steamers ply to the Uganda shores. Here a disappointment awaited me: the weekly steamer had been cancelled, and I had to kick my heels for seven days at this not very delectable place. Misfortunes, in Africa as elsewhere, never come singly; and I discovered on arrival at Kisumu that my two boys had been inadvertently dropped at a wayside station during the night, so that I was unable to handle my goods or pitch my tent. All attempts to secure a spot where I could stretch my weary limbs for the night were fruitless. The 'bungalow'—an importation from India, evidently—where as a rule a room could be obtained, was full to overflowing. I was referred to the hotel, and thither I went. Every room was occupied. Returning to the station, I represented my sad case to the Goanese station-master, and begged him to take compassion on me. He was polite but apologetic. He had not a square yard of room on the station premises, and as for a carriage—there was 'the inspector, you know, who will not allow such things.' So I sat me down disconsolate upon one of the benches provided for the accommodation of homeless travellers. When the last train had taken its departure that evening,

and the crowd of loiterers had dwindled away, the station-master approached me—the somewhat mythical 'inspector' had, I suppose, gone off to dinner—and pointing to an empty coach said graciously, 'You may occupy that, sir.' I did not require any further hint, but forthwith conveyed myself and my rugs into the compartment indicated, and spent a comfortable night.

Next day, however, the housing problem was as acute as ever, for my coach was whirled away, and I was left stranded as before upon the platform. Matters were complicated to-day by the intrusion of my enemy the malaria, which took advantage of my return to a tropical environment in order to apprise me of the unwelcome truth that it had not yet been ejected from my system. 'Naturam expelles furcâ,' I thought with old Horatius, 'tamen usque recurret.' The only moral which I had power to draw from my experience was this—If you must have fever, choose some other place for your attack than the platform of a railway station, and some more comfortable couch than an unyielding wooden bench. A ray of comfort pierced the gloom that evening when an incoming goods train brought my truant boys. Never was I more pleased to see their sable countenances. The accommodation which the ever-stately station-master provided the second evening was not quite of the same quality as that of the night before. I was reduced from a first-class coach to a brake-van. Nevertheless I was profoundly grateful. My boys unpacked my bedstead and prepared my couch, and I made another good night of it.

On discovering that I had to stay over a week at Kisumu, I planned visits to some missions in the near vicinity, and began to think that I should thus find compensations for my enforced detention. But I was reckoning without mine host the malarial microbe. He laid me flat upon my back for the best part of the week, and when at length I shook myself free of his clutch, my physical condition was such that I could not think of a long bicycle ride of fifteen or twenty miles to outlying missions. This was a great loss, but to losses like this the missionary traveller must accustom himself.

On Sunday the 17th January 1915 the lake steamer *Clement Hill* was due to take us across to Uganda. By kind permission of the captain I was allowed to go on board the

previous evening. After settling myself and my parcels, I found a bit of deck space where my boys could deposit themselves and their bundles. Next morning at eight o'clock we steamed off. At about ten I wanted a box moved and went to look for my attendants. They were nowhere to be found. I searched high and low, and questioned all and sundry. It appeared in the upshot that while I was unsuspectingly breakfasting that morning, a too officious medical officer had come on board, and finding my servants unprovided with a bill of health, had bundled them ashore, without notifying their master or giving them the opportunity of communicating with him. That I was indignant at such discourtesy goes without saying, but indignation did not mend matters. The captain was sympathetic, and promised to fetch my boys along the following week; but the incident meant another delay of seven days in Kampala, and the further postponement of the date of my departure for the Congo. For the fourth time within a week did I realise the truth that 'Misfortunes never come singly.'

Our voyage across the lake was in many respects an interesting one. For one thing, there was a spice of danger in it. A German gunboat was known to be prowling about at the south end of the Nyanza, on the lookout for lawful booty. One of the steamers of the Victoria Marine—I am not sure whether it was the *Winifred* or the *Sybil*—had been reported sunk through striking on a rock; but I had a shrewd suspicion that the rock in question was 'made in Germany.' The captains of the other vessels had been warned to exercise the greatest caution in navigating the lake, and Captain Grey observed his instructions to the letter. At night all lights were quenched; while in dangerous waters, we lay at anchor during the hours of darkness; a suspicious native canoe was fired on, pursued, overtaken, and burnt, the crew being taken on board and handed over to the authorities. I hope that they succeeded in proving their innocence, but I doubt whether they ever saw compensation for their boat. Thus cautiously nosing our way, we reached the western shore in safety, and I landed at Kampala in due season.

It was a great pleasure to meet on board a party of four going out to the Belgian Congo, to reinforce the ranks of the Africa Inland Mission. They were Mr. and Mrs. Lanning,

Americans, and two Misses Mozley from England. We had most happy Christian intercourse while voyaging across the lake, and I was able to take them for a rapid tour of Kampala during the steamer's detention at Port Bell. Mr. and Mrs. Lanning were destined for Mahagi, and the Misses Mozley for Dungu, so that they were glad of the information which I could given them as to ways and means. I have since heard that they reached their respective destinations in safety, though the two ladies, unaccustomed to the strain which African travel imposes, especially to those who first make acquaintance with its exhausting climate, were completely worn out before they arrived at Dungu.

Rough is the highway
  Onward, still onward!
Upward and forward!
  Time will restore us;
Light is above us,
  Rest is before us.

# CHAPTER XVI

## TO THE MOUNTAINS OF THE MOON

> The Egyptian river called the Nile is the river of Nubia. Its springs are in the Mountains of the Moon, which divide the inhabited land to the south of the equator, and that on the outside, from the southern unknown countries, whereof there is no information. The number of its springs are ten rivers, running with haste in ten valleys, between high trees and compact sands, and . . . all flow together into two large lakes, the distance between these being four days.
>
> MOHAMMED ED DIMACHQÊ,
> (Arab geographer, fourteenth century).

### *The March to Toro*

FROM Kampala I struck direct westwards for Toro, otherwise known as Fort Portal. The road under construction will, when completed, be available for motor traffic. A man with a light car, who is willing to take risks, can accomplish the journey even in the present condition of the track. The Government motor-trolley, however, runs for a distance of only one hundred and twenty-five miles, leaving another eighty to be done on foot. This motor-van, on the day we left, was piled mountain-high with a huge home mail. When to this were added my own loads, and the packages destined for officials and traders at distant outposts, there appeared to be no room for even a cat. My missing boys, to my great joy, had that very morning arrived from the steamer, and I was determined, whatever might befall, that I would not lose sight of them again. As the pile of luggage grew, so grew my apprehension. For me there was a narrow seat alongside of the chauffeur, but my boys were supposed to hang on behind. At length I said to them, ' Get up, get up at once ; dig in your fingers and toes and sit fast.' The natural man (*vide* Darwin) is a natural monkey. Not only my boys, but two *askari* (native soldiers), an Asiatic, a couple of blacks who assisted the chauffeur, a Muganda clerk in a white suit, and two native

women, attached themselves to the vehicle in some mysterious way which I could not fathom. And thus we set off.

On the third day commenced the *safari*. This is a common noun with the meaning *voyage, journey, caravan, string of porters*, etc. It is also a verb signifying *to travel, to march, to trek*, and in this sense it is used by Briton and Boer in East Africa. Behold me then, on the 28th January 1915, commencing to *safari* from Kibale, the terminus of the motor journey, to Toro, nestling in the foothills of Ruwenzori. The road was good, the porters provided for me were well up to the average, a pleasant breeze from the south-east tempered the heat, and we made good progress. On the road to Toro I found a species of rest-hut, which is little more than a roof without walls, sufficient to protect you from the dew, but a poor defence against wind and slanting rain. Still, so long as the weather was fairly dry, it was preferable to the trouble of pitching and striking tent, and by suitably adjusting a piece of canvas I secured a measure of shelter against the night winds, which, especially in the vicinity of Ruwenzori, were often quite cold.

There was not much to rivet attention on the Kibale-Toro road. This may perhaps be due to the fact that my attention was preoccupied with my feet. It was a long time since I had been on the trail, and my soles had been growing tender through prolonged inaction. The daily stages were long—eighteen miles was the average—and it is always wise, when just commencing your *safari*, to do short stages, so as to allow time for the feet to harden and for the joints to become supple. In my case the result could have been foreseen. Blisters began to appear, now in one part of the foot and anon in another. Every night I rubbed the tender spots with a mixture of salt and brandy, and every morning, after passing the seventh milestone, I would be conscious that a new blister was forming in a still unaffected area of my sole. This latest addition to the crop of wheals would monopolise my attention for a distance of four miles, when suddenly a feeling of tenderness on the other foot would suggest that a vesicle was forming there, and I would learn by painful experience how great is the expulsive power of a new affliction. When I arrived at Toro I was a specialist in blebs and blisters. After wanderings in all parts of the continent I have come to the deliberate conclusion that you must walk two hundred miles before you

can expect that your feet will have become even reasonably indurated. When you have passed the two-hundredth milestone, there is nothing more to fear from boots too small or too large, soles too thick or too thin, and heels too high or too low. Your feet can then be safely classified under the order of the pachydermata.

### *A Celestial Phenomenon*

Though the rains were already due, we fortunately encountered no showers on the way to Toro. The sky was dark with smoke, for the natives were busy burning the old grass by way of preparing the soil for the new herbage. Morning by morning the sun rose upon a darkened world, and as the day progressed the darkness deepened. Not once on all the journey did I obtain a view of the valleys and hills of Uganda. The land lay in mourning; nature was wrapped in gloom, and black clouds curtained the sky. On a certain day—it was the 30th January—the clouds of smoke and fog attained a density which I had never before witnessed. After the sun had (presumedly) passed the meridian, though we had not once seen his face, darkness fell upon us with startling suddenness. It seemed as though night were at hand. I looked at my watch, but it was only two of the afternoon, and yet it was as though the sun had already set and swift tropical night was closing in. I looked apprehensively round the horizon—perhaps some terrible storm was brewing. But no, there was no sign of lightning, nor the least sound of distant thunder. I looked up at the sky overhead, and saw nothing but a pall of smoke. But what was that curious little red spot that showed itself up yonder from time to time? It looked remarkably like a ganger's red night-lantern. It took me a full minute before I realised that I was looking at the sun itself, that showed so red and menacing through the heavy clouds. Many years ago I remember noticing similar phenomena during a total eclipse of the sun. Darkness overspread the earth, leaves and trees cast curious semicircular shadows, men's voices sank to whispers, animals looked round in wild alarm, birds and fowls went to roost. All was gloom and mystery. The celestial phenomena which I witnessed on the Toro road were precisely similar. I was solemnised. My thoughts rushed forward to the great Day, and to the ' blood and fire and vapour of smoke.'

Scientists tell that the magnificent glow which colours the western sky at sunset is caused by the passage of the sun's rays through an atmosphere charged with the dust and smoke that ascend from the busy world in which we dwell. The eruption of Krakatoa in 1883 distributed the fine dust of the ejected ashes all over the world, and gave rise to sunsets of unexampled beauty. The dust and ashes, then, which we so greatly abhor, possess the virtue of creating for us those enchanting sunset effects on which we can never gaze enough. What indeed are dust and dirt but matter out of place, which in a happier environment are seen to have not merely utilitarian but æsthetic value.

### *Toro and its Sights*

It was the 2nd February when I reached Toro. Early that morning we had had our first rain, which delayed us for about two hours at a roadside village. When the rain ceased and the clouds had partially cleared, I observed a long mountain—it might have been called a range—running in a south-westerly direction. It took some time before I realised that this was Ruwenzori itself, which I had viewed (at a distance of a hundred and twenty miles) from the mountains west of Lake Albert. A feeling of disappointment came over me. Was this all? Where were the glaciers and the lofty snow-clad peaks, the towering cliffs and foaming waterfalls? At a later stage I found that what I saw was only the northern extremity of the Ruwenzori range, while the peaks and glaciers lay farther to the south and west.

Toro has a picturesque situation on the eastern flank of the Ruwenzori. The soil is rich and well-watered, the population heavy, the climate healthy, and the surroundings romantic. Toro itself occupies three or four hills or spurs, one being reserved for the administrative and commercial quarter, the next, occupied by the various agencies of the Church Missionary Society, the third, the site of the Roman Catholic Mission. I received great kindness during my stay from the Rev. and Mrs. A. B. Lloyd. Mr. Lloyd was already known to me from his books; for in addition to being a devoted missionary he is also a famous traveller, who many years ago, when such undertakings were fraught with great risk, journeyed from Uganda to the Congo, and from Ruwenzori to Khartum.

At Toro I was detained for three days, owing to endless formalities which it pleased the local administration to subject me to. English officialdom is truly incomprehensible. When I entered Uganda no one took the slightest notice of me, not even to the extent of asking my name, my whence and my whither, nor—*mirabile dictu!*—whether I had anything dutiable with me. But when I left the country, the curiosity of the officials was apparently insatiable. They would know all about me. Documents had to be prepared, undertakings signed, various levies paid, instructions oral and written observed. Porters were supplied, but in addition to the regular pay due to them, the Government mulcted me in an impost of one rupee per porter, because I desired to take them a few short miles across the border to the first Belgian *poste*. And even when I thought myself safely over the border, officialdom was not finished with me yet. A messenger was despatched after me—his pay cost, I am sure, much more than the information which he obtained was worth—with a schedule in which I was required to fill in how many head of game I had shot on my licence, of what sex they were, and in what locality shot; *item*, what weapons I carried, where made, by whom, and how numbered. Downing Street may console itself with the thought that its remote representative in Africa is doing his duty.

> Or, if he finds nobody else there to pother,
> Why, one of his feet will just trip up the other.

The three days which I spent here were in other respects a most interesting time. I greatly enjoyed the rest and intercourse afforded by the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd. The Church Missionary Society has a secure position among the Ba-toro, and here in the capital all its agencies are in full swing. I visited the schools, of which there are two—a boys' school with an attendance of three hundred pupils, and a girls' school, which has a roll of one thousand. This discrepancy between the numbers of boys and girls receiving instruction was explained by the competition of the Roman Catholics, who lure away the boys by the bribe of safety-pins and tobacco. There is quite a seventeenth-century air about this practice, for we are told by Van Riebeek, the first Governor of the Cape in the old Dutch days, that in order to encourage the slave children to attend school regularly, they were

promised ' a glass of wine and two inches of tobacco.' There is, however, this to be said for Van Riebeek, that his offer was a purely disinterested one, since there was in his day no competing academy from which children could be seduced.

The local hospital, presided over by Dr. Bond, his wife and two nurses, is a noble building which exercises a widespread influence. In size and manifold activities it is, of course, not to be compared with the Mengo Hospital of the Doctors Cook, which is famous, not merely all over East Africa, but over the whole of the continent. Nevertheless the Toro Hospital has a very full equipment and a steady flow of patients.

Most interesting was the visit which we paid one afternoon to the king or (as he is styled) the *Bukama* of Toro. David Kasagama, king of the Ba-toro, is a comparatively young man, probably thirty-five years of age, of large build, pleasing countenance, and jovial manner. He is a decided Christian, and a great supporter of the C.M.S. work. His dwelling, all of the most modern style, lies on the summit of a very steep hill, and when once the visitor has scaled this ascent, he is rewarded by a magnificent view of the Ruwenzori Mountains, and of the hills and vales, the gardens and plantations of Toro. The Bukama received us with marked friendliness, and took great pride in conducting us over his newly built residence—a fine double-storey building, with broad verandah and balcony running round the whole. Aided by a Council of Elders this native potentate rules his tens of thousands of subjects in accordance with Christian principles, while the British Government exercises a paternal supervision over both the governor and the governed. In all Africa there are not many native princes who still retain more than a semblance of power; and the few who still have some authority left are in most cases (if we except the Mohammedan sultanates) Christian chiefs. The names of Khama of Bechuanaland, Daudi Chwa of Uganda, and David Kasagama of Toro are a tribute to the moral strength which Christianity imparts and the conserving influence which it exercises.

### *Ruwenzori and its Explorers*

The identification of the ' Mountains of the Moon ' with Ruwenzori has been denied by some, on the ground that the legend of the Lunæ Montes was derived from the east coast

rather than from the Nile valley. But from whatever source derived, the Lunæ Montes were always connected with the Nile, and represented as the sources from which the waters of the ancient river of Egypt were fed. Between Kilimanjaro and Kenia—the only other competitors for the honour of being the Lunæ Montes—and the Nile, there subsists no connection at all; so that the claims of Ruwenzori, as I conceive, cannot be seriously disputed.

Ruwenzori shrouds itself, for the better part of the year, behind impenetrable masses of clouds. This will explain why Stanley, though in 1875 he stood under the shadow of this great mountain, yet had no suspicion of its size and hydrographical importance. Only twice during the year does Ruwenzori afford us brief glimpses of its lofty summits, in July and August, and for a portion of the month of January. At other times it veils its beauties—the craggy peaks and snow-covered summits, the glaciers and ice-fields, the lobelias and dracenæ, and all the rich variety of vegetation, from tropical to arctic, that decks its extensive slopes. Though not the most southerly, Ruwenzori is, nevertheless, one of the ultimate sources of the Nile. Almost all the waters which descend from its snows and glaciers find their way into the Semliki River, and so into Lake Albert, one of the two great reservoirs of the Nile.

While I was still in Kampala, planning my visit to East Africa, one of the missionaries of the C.M.S. informed me of his intention to 'climb Ruwenzori.' That is a very loose and inaccurate way of speaking. Nobody in Europe would talk of 'climbing the Alp,' nor would any one in South Africa say that he purposed 'ascending the Drakensberg.' The Alps and the Drakensbergen are not mountains but extensive ranges. You might very well ascend the Matterhorn in Switzerland, or the Mont aux Souces in Basutoland, but not the Alp or the Drakensberg. Let us then get it firmly fixed in our minds that Ruwenzori is not a mountain, but a range of mountains, with a large number of peaks, which are called Stanley, Speke, and Baker, after the great explorers, or Margherita and Alexandra, after the queens of Italy and England. I travelled for more than a week along the foot of this great range, which is sixty miles long, and thirty miles in depth from east to west. The culminating peak of the western group, Mount Stanley, is but very little short of

seventeen thousand feet high. Travelling southward towards Lake Edward we crossed almost daily many streams of icy water, that flowed from the snowfields of Ruwenzori in order to cool and refresh us. After all the lukewarm water which during many months I had perforce gulped down, these cold waters that flow down from afar tasted like the purest nectar.

Many have been the explorers and mountaineers who have sought to vanquish at least some of the many peaks of Ruwenzori. The names of Stairs, Stuhlmann, Moore, Johnston, and Wollaston deserve mention in this connection; but the most valuable work was done by a fully equipped scientific expedition organised by the Duke of the Abruzzi. Aided by a large number of experts the Duke set about a systematic examination of the range. Many months were devoted to geographical, geological, botanical, and zoological research. The work was carefully apportioned: some undertook the painful task of climbing the snowy peaks, fixing their position, determining their altitude, and so forth; others devoted themselves to a study of the botany of this region; others again collected geological and zoological specimens; and others gave themselves to photography. The great work entitled *Ruwenzori*, in which a full account of the results and discoveries of the expedition is given, is a veritable mine of information regarding the range, and leaves very little for future explorers to glean.

At the time of my stay in Kampala I expressed a wish to join the expedition of my friend who had determined to 'climb Ruwenzori.' There was no objection; but when I found that they were to start early in January, and that I would have to choose between a visit to my friends on the Uasin Gishu plateau and a trip to Ruwenzori, I had regretfully to relinquish my project of joining the mountaineers. I reached Toro just after Mr. Lloyd and party had returned from the mountain expedition, and when I asked him how long they had been away, 'Twenty days,' was his answer.

'What! twenty days to climb these peaks, that lie right in front of us?'

'Yes,' he replied, 'it took us twenty days; for first we had to travel southward for five days before we could find a suitable valley along which to make the ascent. Then we had frequently to camp after we had made but very

little progress, because rain began to fall, or because there was no convenient camping-place ahead. Then there were difficulties of another nature; we landed in deep morasses from which we could hardly extricate ourselves; we could find no dry wood with which to build a fire; the continual rain and heavy fogs gave us all dreadful colds, and impeded our progress; our carriers felt the cold severely, and were hardly able to march; and many more troubles of a similar nature.'

'What height did you actually reach?'

'Well, we got as high as the snow-line, or about fourteen thousand feet,' said Mr. Lloyd.

'And is it so that you had ladies in the party?'

'Yes,' was the reply. 'Both Mrs. Lloyd and Miss Attlee, the head of the girls' school, accompanied us, and went through all the stress and strain, all the discomfort and privation, to which we men were subjected.'

When I questioned Mrs. Lloyd on her experiences, she was not very enthusiastic. The trials of the climb, I suspect, were still too recent. Said she, 'If any of the others like to say they enjoyed the outing, why, let them. For myself, I don't say so. To struggle through morasses, with water and mud up to your knees; to march all day with the rain descending in a continual drizzle; and to camp at night on sodden ground, and creep into a moist and uncomfortable bed, all this may be enjoyable to others, but it certainly is not to me.'

For all that, I cannot help admiring the ladies who could go through such experiences with a courageous and cheerful heart. But who can have anything but admiration for the missionary ladies of Africa, who in enterprise, in perseverance, and in general tenacity yield no whit to the sterner sex.

### *Among the Ruwenzori Foothills*

The journey from Toro to Kasindi, the Belgian *poste* on Lake Edward, occupied eight days. Despite the fact that my feet were not yet in marching order, and that one of my boys was in for a dose of malaria, it was a pleasant tour. Night after night I encamped with the dark mass of Ruwenzori towering above my tent door. During the day the mountain was almost always obscured by clouds, but towards evening they would occasionally roll away, disclosing deep

THE KIVU LAVA-FIELDS
Kuku (seated) and Suli (standing)

A QUIET SMOKE

valleys, great cliffs, thick forest, and lofty white-tipped peaks. The first three days were somewhat strenuous, as we clambered up and down the valleys and spurs of the range; but when we commenced the descent of the foothills to the level plain, the marching became easy and delightful. The views, on a clear day, were especially fine. In the early morning, before the hot sunshine called cloud and mist into being, we had ravishing views of the snow-peaks of Ruwenzori. Then the rising sun would colour the whole massive range a rich purple. In front, we looked down upon the mimosa-covered, grassy foothills, beyond which lay the parklike plains, frequented by herds of antelopes. Away to the east stretched the Portal Mountains, bounding a broad prairie, in which we descry the gleaming waters of Lake Dweru, and of the curious salt lakes that are such a marked characteristic of this region. The flats lying between the mountain and these lakes teem with game. In the whole continent there are not many such game districts as the shores of Lake Edward. Elsewhere, as I have described in previous chapters, you plunge into the forest on the bare chance of seeing and shooting an antelope, and the disappointments far outnumber the successes. But around Lake Edward it is very different. The game animals stand on the broad open plain looking at you, and it is merely a question of doing a careful stalk and holding a straight rifle. I shot in this vicinity waterbuck, reedbuck, cob, bushbuck, and topi. I also saw buffalo, without being successful in bringing one down, and at Kasindi I met an elephant hunter who makes the Semliki River his hunting-ground. The waterbuck on these flats have very fine horns, and I secured a pair that was thirty-four and three-quarter inches on the curve and twenty-nine and a half from tip to tip, which is very near a record.

At Kasindi I remained four days, waiting for canoes to take me across the lake. M. Wessels, a Fleming, was particularly friendly, and supplied me from day to day with as much fresh milk as I could consume. He also gave me valuable information as to the route which I would have to follow to Lake Kivu. As far as the next *poste*, Rutshuru, lying three days' march south of the lake, I would have no difficulty, so he assured me; but whether or no the authorities would permit me to travel further south, he could not say. His doubts, as will presently appear, were fully justified.

A forty-five-foot canoe bore us across Lake Edward. Such a craft is too unsafe for a direct voyage from the north shore to the south, for in the middle of the lake violent winds and choppy seas constitute a grave danger to a vessel without keel. The course pursued is all along the western shore. This gives the paddlers the opportunity of camping at night, either on the sand or in some convenient village. The safety thus secured is worth the extra expenditure of time.

The eastern shores of Lake Albert are, generally speaking, flat, but on the western side the lake is shut in by a lofty range which forms the western wall of the Albertine Rift Valley. This Albertine or Western Rift Valley corresponds to the Great Rift Valley of British East Africa; and the two mighty fissures in the earth's crust run a parallel course, the Western Rift issuing in the Nile Valley, and the Eastern Rift continuing, with some interruptions, in a northerly direction to the shores of the Gulf of Aden. We journeyed, as I have said, along the western shore of Lake Edward, and were thus continually under the shadow of the overhanging range, which here comes down to the very edge of the water. I was greatly disappointed in not being able to obtain any views across the lake. During the dry weather a thick, impenetrable haze hangs over the surface, so that one cannot see more than a few miles. When the rains set in the haze lifts and allows of fine long-distance views of the mountains to north and west and south-east.

The waters of the lake swarm with fish, from the huge barbels which float on the surface, their mustachios showing like the feelers of a crayfish, to the diminutive herrings that form the staple food of the black-and-white kingfishers sitting perched on every projecting branch. Immense numbers of pelicans sail majestically over the water. Soaring sea-eagles utter their hoarse screams. Schools of hippos disport themselves in the shallows. There are few villages on these shores. One night we camped on a narrow spit of sand within a few hundred yards of the home of a large family of hippos, who happily did not resent this intrusion into their private domain.

On the fourth day after our departure from Kasindi, we reached the south shore at Kabare, which lies in a swamp, and forms a breeding-ground for such innumerable swarms of mosquitoes as I hope never again to meet. Here I had a

veritable fight for dear life with my inveterate enemies. They sallied out at sunset in myriads. They attacked me in front and in the rear; they stung me on hands and neck and face; they bit through my socks and my trousers. Determined to secure a bite and sup in spite of all the mosquitoes of Africa, I cast a blanket over my lower extremities, and wrapped my head and neck in a towel. Imagine a man sitting thus swathed like a mummy at half a degree south of the Equator! But the mosquitoes would not be denied. They assailed me between the joints of my armour; they got in under the towel, they insinuated themselves beneath the blanket; until at last, utterly routed, I drew off, leaving my unfinished supper on the table. Undressing with what speed I could, I tried to make good my escape under the net of my bed, but my foes were in too close pursuit, and when I examined the interior of my fortress I found a number of the enemy within the citadel. To clear them out was a work that required time, patience, and skill. At length I seemed to have made an end of all, and composed myself to slumber. An end of all!—vain hope. In hidden corners and crevices my unsleeping foes lurked, carrying on all night a guerilla warfare, murdering sleep, causing restlessness, and predisposing to malaria.

### *The Volcanic Region round Rutshuru*

The Belgian *poste* Rutshuru lies three days' march south of Lake Edward. The region through which we passed on our march thither began to exhibit a strong volcanic character. A little to the west of the road we traversed there are hot springs that go by the name of *Mai-na-moto* ('water of fire'). All the waters of this broad valley drain into the Rutshuru River, which falls into Lake Edward somewhat to the east of Kabare. From Rutshuru, which lies in a lofty position on the eastern side of the valley, there are fine views to east and south. Looking eastward we see the wall of the Rift Valley running north and south as far as eye can follow; on the west is a similar range, which, however, does not rise so steeply from the floor of the valley; and in the south we distinguish the group of volcanic mountains which go collectively under the name of Mfumbiro. For the geologist this is probably one of the most fascinating spots in the whole continent.

In a recent period of geologic time, so the experts opine, internal volcanic action effected the upheaval of this portion of the earth's crust. The valley was thus completely blocked, and a gigantic wall was thrown up between the river systems of the Nile and the Congo. Before that time it is probable that Lake Kivu emptied its volume of water into Lake Edward through the present Rutshuru River, and so stood in connection with the Nile. At present its overflow runs through the Rusizi channel into Lake Tanganyika, which is a part of the hydrographical system of the Congo. The Mfumbiro volcanoes consist of eight cones, some of which have been active in quite recent years. Directly north of Kivu lie the two peaks of Cha-nina-gongo (eleven thousand feet) and Namlagira. Further to the east the mountains rise to a greater height. Karisimbi, the highest of the range (fourteen thousand five hundred feet) is always snow-covered. Mahavura, Mgahinga and Sabinyo are the most easterly peaks; and Mikeno and Visoki complete the eight. The still active region is to be found in the west, around the first-named peaks. The expedition of the Duke of Mecklenburg, in 1907, witnessed an eruption of Namlagira, and Cha-nina-gongo displayed activity at the same time. In 1912 Sir Alfred Sharpe, according to the *Geographical Journal*, saw another eruption in the western area, though it does not clearly appear which of the cones was active.

Owing to the hazy weather to which I have already referred, I got no complete view of the group of mountains, though I caught sight of the two western peaks, which, as the active cones, are of chief importance. They lie on the edge of the valley, which is here about fifteen miles broad. The floor of this valley consists of lava of recent date. Towards the west the bed of lava has been covered over with a layer of soil, which is extremely fruitful, and yields large crops of cereals to the population that dwell here. Beyond this fertile tract stretches a region in which the lava has not yet been strewn with surface soil, but is already covered with a fairly dense forest of the hardiest trees. Beyond this forest, still further to the west, lies a broad plain of naked lava, evidently the outflow of recent eruptions from Cha-nina-gongo and Namlagira. With these three clearly defined areas in the Rutshuru valley we shall presently make closer acquaintance.

*Under Martial Law*

At Rutshuru I was for the first time reminded of the fact that war was raging in the great world by seeing active preparations for defence before my eyes. A dozen or so of Belgian officers were stationed here: native soldiers were being subjected to rigorous drill; recruits were being booked; large numbers of natives, both men and women, were engaged in carrying baskets full of soil, in order to strengthen the earthwork fort which represented the defences of Rutshuru. An English general was here on a visit, probably in order to confer with the Belgian commander as to a common line of strategy. When I asked for leave to proceed southward to Lakes Kivu and Tanganyika, I was met with a very emphatic negative. It was not to be thought of. Military operations were in progress all along the German border, and it was quite impossible to permit a civilian to pass that way. In fact, there was no alternative for me but to go back the way I had come, recross Lake Edward, and proceed along the Semliki valley to Irumu, and thence *via* the Ituri and Aruwimi rivers to the Congo. This was a terrible blow to my hopes. So I began to plead with the commandant, who had shown me great kindness already. I represented to him that I had just come from Toro, which was within five or six days' march of Irumu; that I had spent twenty days on the march from Toro, and that, if I was compelled to return the same way, it would mean a loss of forty days which I could ill afford; and finally, that if the road to Kivu and the south was out of the question, there remained an alternative route over the western mountains by way of Walikale and Lubutu.

'Ah,' said M. Roemdonck, 'but that is a strategical way; we cannot allow you to travel by that route.'

'What is a strategical way?' I ventured to ask, 'and why cannot I make use of it?'

'It is the way which we have lately opened from the Congo, in order to permit our officers from the Central Congo to reach the eastern frontier.'

'Well,' said I, 'and why may not I journey over this strategical way?'

'No, no,' was the reply, 'it is only for our own functionaries, and not for the general public. But,' he added kindly,

'if you like I will speak to the Commissaire about the matter.'

In the afternoon my kind friend came to me again, and said that the Commissaire-général, M. Henry, had waived his objections, and would permit me to travel by way of Walikale, subject to certain conditions, viz., that I should sign a paper indemnifying the Government against any loss, delay or inconvenience I might experience on this route, and that I would promise to impart no information to the Germans. These conditions, needless to say, I was perfectly willing to fulfil. I therefore signed the following declaration, which at my request was executed in duplicate, myself retaining one copy.

*Déclaration*

Nous soussigné, Johannes du Plessis, missionaire anglais, déclare en prenant la route de Rutshuru-Massisi-Walikale-Lubutu-Kirundu, dégager le Gouvernement de la Colonie de toute responsabilité des accidents et des inconvéniants ainsi que des pertes que nous pourrions, moi et mes serviteurs, éprouver ou rencontrer par cette voie. C'est à mon insistance que cette autorisation m'a été accordée. Je déclare en outre n'avoir aucune relation avec les Allemands, et je donne ma parole de n'entretenir avec les ennemis de la Colonie aucun rapport durant le cours de mon voyage.

Le déclarant,
J. DU PLESSIS.

RUTSHURU, *le* 24/2/15,
LE COMMANDANT DE LA PLACE, ROEMDONCK.

## *A Crater Lake*

The formalities thus satisfactorily adjusted, I packed my boxes and made ready to leave. The room in which I was housed was requisitioned for an officer, and I had already been notified that I could not occupy it for more than two days. On the 25th February, accordingly, we started. Besides my two boys I had a string of eighteen porters, and M. Roemdonck had also very kindly supplied me with two *askari*, who went in the capacity of guides and policemen. The first day's march, however, was but a sort of preliminary canter, and we did no more than five miles. At a distance of two miles from Rutshuru we branched off to the right from the road leading to Kivu, and marching through green meadows and smiling gardens, passed a beautiful crater lake

between the fourth and fifth milestones. This was the first lake of this kind which I was able to view at close quarters. It was nearly circular in shape, with the north and south sides slightly depressed. On the west side a peninsula projected into the lake for about half of its diameter. This peninsula had a miniature mountain on its southern side, and was clad with forest and partly fringed with papyrus. The shores of the lake were covered with a heavy growth of papyrus, and on the slopes higher up grew considerable groves of wild bananas. The surface of the water lay at a level of about one hundred and fifty feet below the rim of the lake basin, and the approximate diameter of the lake itself, from west to east, was seven hundred and fifty yards. I had unfortunately no means of measuring the depth of the water. There were no streams flowing into the lake, and I saw no waterfowl on the shores, so I conclude that its fish, if there is any, must be few and small. The lake lies in the midst of a piece of undulating open country, and no one would suspect its existence until actually walking on its edge.

This little lake, on yonder remote hillside, teaches me truths that lie beyond the reach of utterance. It is not subject to stress and strain and earthly vicissitude. The howling storm-wind cannot do more than ruffle its surface. No fish disport themselves in its depths. No birds of prey defile its spotless green banks. No human beings descend its steep sides to bathe in its dark waters. No brawling river pours a discoloured flood into its silent bosom. The drifting clouds above and the fountains of the great deep below renew its water-supply.

To thee only God granted
A heart ever new;
To all always open,
To all always true.

Ah! calm me, restore me!
And dry up my tears
On thy high mountain platforms,
Where morn first appears.

Where the white mists for ever
Are spread and upfurl'd;
In the stir of the forces
Whence issued the world.

# CHAPTER XVII

## THROUGH VOLCANIC REGIONS

Friends who set forth at our side
Falter, are lost in the storm!
We, we only, are left!
With frowning foreheads, with lips
Sternly compressed we strain on,
On—and at nightfall, at last,
Come to the end of our way.
Where the gaunt, taciturn Host
Stands on the threshold and asks:
Whom in our party we bring?
Whom we have left in the snow?
Sadly we answer: We bring
Only ourselves; we lost
Sight of the rest in the storm.
Hardly ourselves we fought through,
Stripped, without friends, as we are,
Friends, companions, and train
The avalanche swept from our side.

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

### *The vast Lava-fields of Rutshuru*

AFTER passing the crater lake we found ourselves on the renowned 'strategical way' which was to conduct us to the Lualaba and Stanleyville. I shall have something more to say about its strategical value presently. Just now let me give you a description of the first day's march. I have already explained that the valley which lay before us was divided into three zones running lengthwise down it—first, the zone of volcanic but cultivable soil; next, the zone of lava covered with forest; and last, the zone of recent lava, without tree or shrub or vestige of grass. Leaving the village at which we had passed the night, we marched on for about thirty minutes until we reached a fair-sized river which flows into the Rutshuru. This I was obliged to crawl across precariously on the limb of a fallen tree, and I began to cherish doubts about the security and efficiency of the 'strategical way,' on which I had

been led to build such high hopes. Immediately after passing the river we plunged into a dense undergrowth, and my men had great difficulty in keeping the track. The trees were closely interlaced above our heads, the path was but six inches wide, and thorny shrubs impeded our progress. The road became continually stonier, for we had entered the second zone, and had under our feet merely a bed of lava, very lightly covered with herbage and fallen forest leaves. Every now and again we saw, lying athwart the path, what looked exactly like the petrified roots of ancient trees, but what was in reality nothing but pure lava of the so-called 'corded' variety. To right and to left of our track were frequent curious caves, at spots where the stream of lava had apparently flowed over the ancient rocky floor of the valley. The insatiable termites, finding here no soil from which to construct their ant-mounds, build nests in the trees, which leave the strange impression of a huge beehive suspended from the branch of a tree. Over this volcanic bed marching was exceedingly difficult, and I felt very sorry for my boys and carriers, whose feet were much bruised by the sharp pathway.

After two hours of toilsome marching we halted for a few minutes, and then pushed on again. There was no stage on all my journeyings through Africa when I suffered more through ignorance of the language. Had I been able to speak the Bangalla trade language, I might have learned from the two *askari*, who were both intelligent men, that we were about to cross an immense waterless stretch of lava. Not knowing this, I could not at the time conceive of a broad valley between lofty mountains being itself waterless, and therefore I made no special provision for water on the road. As a matter of fact, the river we crossed at 6.30 that morning contained the last water which I saw or drank till late that afternoon, when we reached a village lying high up on the western slopes of the valley.

At about half an hour before midday we got to the end of the second zone. With great suddenness the forest came to an end, and we looked across a veritable sea of volcanic rocks that stretch to the blue mountains lying away in the west. I surmise that westward from this point the lava stream which flowed down the valley from Namlagira or Cha-nina-gongo, has submerged the older rocks and vegetation, thus raising

the third zone to a level of ten or twelve feet above the surface of the second zone. At any rate, immediately the forest ceased, we clambered up a bank of lava, from the summit of which we looked back eastward into the dark forest, and forward westward over the wild masses of volcanic rock.

It was an extraordinary scene. In the vicinity of Graaff Reinet, South Africa, is a place known as the 'Valley of Desolation,' which is nothing but a wild conglomeration of gigantic rocks cast pell-mell across the plain, as though by the hand of some ruthless Frankenstein. This lava sea is a kind of 'Valley of Desolation' in miniature, only instead of smooth and solid rock we have rough, porous lava, looking for all the world like huge, petrified sponges. We gaze upon a picture of unspeakable confusion. It is as though some monstrous demon has poured a stream of fiery rock over this vast plain, and in his frenzy crushed out every vestige of life beneath a sheet of molten iron. We seem to hear the roar of hidden furnaces and the rush and hiss of steaming rock-masses. We seem to look affrighted at the countenance of the insane giant who dares to defy the Almighty and demolish His handiwork. We gaze with horror at the desolation which he works, and at the swift and tragic transformation of smiling meadows into a waste, howling wilderness. And this monster still hides in yonder smoking mountains: the breath of his nostrils is still visible; and we realise that he is chained but not tamed, and that he may at any moment break his bonds and crush puny man to powder.

The struggle across this tumbled mass of volcanic rocks was painful and exhausting to the last degree. The feet of my carriers and boys, in spite of the fact that they wore improvised sandals, were terribly lacerated. I looked apprehensively at my own boots, which could not long endure the teeth of these sharp rocks. But after about two miles of clambering up and down, and in and out of, the jagged boulders, we arrived at another portion of the lava-field, which revealed quite a different appearance. Instead of the spongy—or, as it is technically called 'scoriaceous'—lava, we came to a section of lava of the 'corded' variety. The surface of the rock was in general smooth and round, passing into a series of semicircular waves. These waves represent the hot lava-stream in the process of cooling, and in that stage when it has become sufficiently solidified to flow like a stream

of thick treacle. Across this part of the valley we made better progress, though the effort to leap from rock to rock cast a considerable strain on the leg-muscles.

It was here that I began to suffer from the tortures of thirst. I had drunk no drop of water or tea since early dawn. The tremendous exertion under a merciless sun over the fearful lava rendered my palate as dry as a potsherd. From time to time, on my journeyings, I had been subjected to the discomfort of lack of water, but never, before or since, have I really suffered as I did then. I ruminated on the boasted 'strategical way,' and wondered whether even the irresistible Napoleon would not have hesitated before venturing to march an army across this pitiless waste. At about two o'clock we emerged, to my unbounded relief, from the volcanic area, and stood once again upon firm red earth. And now commenced the ascent of the foothills; for the village at which we were to spend the night lay some distance up the western slope. Ever up and up we struggled, and still no water. I could not understand it. Did the waters of this great range refuse to waste themselves upon the arid, irresponsive valley below? It was near four o'clock before we arrived at Tonga, high up upon the mountainside. Here at length I was able to slake my thirst, and never did water taste so sweet. The village, if village it can be called, consisted of half a dozen huts. Conveniences for the traveller there were none. The place was filthy, and I did not dare to occupy a hut, but solved the problem of accommodation by levelling six square yards of surface and pitching my tent. The day's march, despite our strenuous exertions, was but seventeen miles. A heavy thunderstorm overtook us that night, and some water from the hill-slopes submerged a portion of my floor.

### *A Day of Disaster*

The next day was the 27th February 1915—a day which I shall long have reason to remember. Our 'strategical way' led us to-day all along the mountainside in southerly direction. The slopes were intercepted by deep ravines, and what with wet roads and heavy elephant grass lying right across the path, the carriers had a bad time, frequently having to crawl on hands and feet under the impenetrable grass. When I was congratulating myself that we would soon swerve to the right

and ascend the range, lo! and behold, our road suddenly dipped down to the left, and we found ourselves again on the lava-field. I shuddered. Were we to repeat yesterday's story? We passed first over a field of flat, smooth rocks, that offered no impediment to marching; then through a forest with pumice-stone bed; then across a sea of sharp, jagged, lichen-covered rocks; finally, through a forest of trees, growing in a basin of sharp stones. Progress was exceedingly slow. At the lapse of six hours we had covered, as I calculated, only eight miles.

When we were on the outskirts of the last forest of trees, a thunderstorm, which had been threatening for some time, fell upon us from the west. I gathered my followers together under the shelter of a smooth rock, and covered over my goods with a bit of canvas, in hopes that the storm would pass. Instead, it drew nearer; premonitory drops fell; distant thunders growled; and I consulted my *askari* as to how we ought to act. There was nothing to do, they said, but to march straight on to the village which was our destination. On the bare rocks we could not remain. The mountain was equally barren and shelterless; there we could not camp. Villages there were none, nor food, nor overhanging rock. To march forward was our only course. In this verdict the carriers concurred. So on we went.

The heavens meanwhile had become completely obscured. The tempest drew nigher. The distant growl of the thunder became a steady roll. The lightnings were closer and more incessant. Dark clouds gathered above us, hung menacingly over our heads, and warned us by voice and flash that they were the harbingers of evil and the dispensers of death. The rain began to descend, first in quiet drops, that seemed to lull our fears, but soon with greater force, and finally in fearful gusts and squalls that struck at us straight from the heart of the storm. It was grand, but awe-inspiring.

By this time I had won through the forest with its stony floor, and had commenced the ascent of the mountain. A way which I could not mistake had been cut through the tall grass, and up this I toiled. My boys and men fell behind, but I had no thought of waiting for them, as I was intent upon finding some sort of refuge against the fearful weather. The mountain was steep, the road was a furrow, progress was difficult, for I had to balance myself now on the one side and

now on the other of the gutter. Higher and higher I clambered, while the waters descended in a steady flood. I sought refuge for a moment or two under the trunk of a tree that grew beside the way, but the rain forced itself through Burberry waterproof, khaki jacket and 'solaro' shirt, and ran down my back in two gentle streams to my squelching boots. Within three minutes my chin began to quiver, though I was standing less than one degree south of the Equator. 'Well,' I said to myself, 'if you remain here, you will soon be frozen. There 's nothing to be done but to march.' And so I started again, onward and upward.

The sluices of the heavens remained wide open and the water streamed down in an uninterrupted torrent. I approached the very centre of the storm. It was almost as dark as night, and black angry clouds hemmed me in. Dense, clammy mists swirled about me, penetrating to my very bones. The lightnings blinded me; the thunderclaps, terrible in their fierce crashes, bewildered me; and their endless reverberations peopled the invisible mountain-slopes with legions of malign spirits, who sought thus to express their resentment at man's insolence and intrusive folly. All my surroundings were full of hidden menace, as if the storm-spirits had determined upon my destruction, and were only waiting for the dark curtain of the night to fall, in order to carry out their nefarious design. The narrow path seemed to be my only friend, for it promised to conduct me to shelter and safety.

In course of time I reached the top of the mountain. I looked back to see if any of my followers were within sight, but the mists cut off all sight, and I turned to pursue my solitary way. The apprehensions that now arose I could not wholly quell. Where was I? How much further was it to Mukuli's village? Had I not perhaps passed our rendezvous in the storm? How were my men faring? But speculations were useless. Only one duty was plain, that of moving on, in order to retain warmth and life in my frame. It became two o'clock, half-past two, three o'clock, and nothing that even looked like a hut or a group of huts showed through the mist. Then doubt triumphed, and I said to myself, 'You have overpassed the mark; the village lies behind you.' The feeling of being lost is the most miserable sensation that can take possession of the human heart. It begets a state of uncertainty and anxiety which saps your manhood and your

strength. I knew not what to do. I retraced my footsteps, in the hope that some of my lagging porters would soon come up with me. After I had marched back upon my own tracks for more than a mile, one of the two *askari* came into sight. It was like a load off my heart. I could never have believed that I would view the blue uniform of the Belgian native soldier with such undisguised delight.

'Is it near or far to Mukuli's village?' I asked.

'Mbari,' was the answer. ('It is far.')

'And what of the others, are they near or far?'

'Mbari,' said the man, again.

I hoped that the 'mbari' would prove to be not so very far, and turned to traverse the bit of roadway before me for the third time. The storm had now spent its fury, though the rain still fell steadily. We had passed the highest ridge of the range, and were on the undulating plateau above. For another hour and a half the *askari* and I pushed on, unhasting but unresting, till at 4.30, weary and faint with hunger, we caught sight through the mists of the roofs of Mukuli's town. Since six o'clock that morning I had been marching, without rest, without refreshment, without food but a small biscuit or two; and still with courage and strength enough to fight through the tempest, and to reach our destination. My heart overflowed in gratitude to Him whose path is in the storm, that it had pleased Him to bring me in safety out of my distresses.

### *The Fate of my Followers*

I was now filled with apprehension for my boys and porters. Where could they be? The *askari* had said that they were far in the rear, and I could do nothing but wait, and hope that they would soon arrive. The hut assigned me afforded but poor accommodation. There were two entrances, neither of which had a door, and the mist and mountain wind swept through the little structure and chilled me. The wood was wet, and it was a hard matter to coax a little fire into life. My clothes were soaking; I had no change of garments, no food, no means of preparing a warm cup of coffee; and there was no other couch but the moist grass on which to stretch myself. Yet somehow, in my anxiety concerning my men, I did not notice these deprivations much, except, indeed, the lack of dry clothing. I tried to dry first one garment and

then another before the feeble flame, but the effort was not very successful.

At about six o'clock Suli turned up, followed by two of the carriers. This greatly relieved me, and I hoped that the others would not be far behind. My boy, however, dashed my hopes by saying that he had not seen Kuku or the rest of the porters for many hours. So down he and I lay before the fire. When darkness fell, and still no one appeared, I requested the old chief to send a relay of men to search for my carriers and assist them with the loads. This he did, while Suli and I lay down to resume our vigil. At ten o'clock two of the search party returned, carrying one of my porters, who was in a frozen condition. We laid him down before a fire in a neighbouring hut, but I was unable to give him a tonic, as my medicine chest was on the road behind. At midnight three other natives returned, carrying my cook, who was in an unconscious condition. Suli and I laid him down before the fire in our own narrow hut, and finding a small flask of brandy in one of the loads which had arrived, I forced a few drops between his lips. More I could not do because of lack of medicines. In this manner, half waking and half sleeping, with the unconscious Kuku moaning between us, did Suli and I pass the long night. No other men and no further loads put in an appearance.

Next morning I gave my attention first of all to Kuku. After the early clouds had been dispersed the sun came out brilliantly. Nature seemed to be in a relenting mood, and determined to make some sort of compensation for the damage and disaster she had brought over us on the previous day. My patient appeared to be slightly better, though still only semi-conscious. There was a little stimulant left in the flask, which I administered. His pulse, however, was very weak, and the shock to which he had been subjected was apparently a severe one. We bore him into the sun, where he lay for a short time under the shelter of an umbrella. The other sick man, in the meantime, had made a good recovery, and was sitting outside enjoying the warm sunshine. But when I went to look at him, I found to my horror that, either through the carelessness of his friends or because of his own unconsciousness, he had fallen bodily into the fire, and was a mass of bad burns and huge unsightly wheals. Poor fellow! as if the misfortunes of the day were not sufficient! I found

some oil, and gently rubbed it on the burns, which covered chest, legs, and arms. Falling into the fire is an accident which is of frequent occurrence among these naked natives, who have nothing to cover themselves with during the long, cold nights, and therefore creep as close as they can to the only source of warmth—the fire.

At ten o'clock the remainder of my carriers arrived at Mukuli's; but what a sorry sight they presented, and what evil tidings they bore. The other *askari*, who had dutifully remained with the porters during the night, came up to me to report.

'Muntu moja alikufa.' ('One man is dead.')

'What is his name?' I asked.

'Gongo,' he replied.

'Has he been buried?'

'Yes,' was the answer; 'we buried him by the wayside.'

This was sad news for me. Never yet had I lost a man by accident, sickness or sudden death, although up to that day I had made use of between five hundred and six hundred Africans as loadsmen. I felt in some measure responsible. And yet I could not accuse myself of having been the cause of his death, however indirectly. An unexpected storm like the one we had passed through, which overtook us just as we were crossing a lofty range seven thousand feet above sea-level, was a hap which no man could have foreseen or provided against. And with this thought I had to rest content.

On the arrival of my loads, in a very sodden and dilapidated condition, I was able to find some medicaments for my sick boy. His pulse remained feeble, and though he was now quite conscious, I could not prevail on him to take any sustenance. In this respect the native is very fatalistic, not to say very obstinate. Once let him think that he is deadly ill, and he refuses food, though he takes drugs gladly, in the vain hope that they will act in some magical manner, and miraculously bring back the tides of health and vigour. All this day, Sunday, the 28th February, we lay quietly at Mukuli's. When Monday morning dawned, I judged that it would be wise for all of us, and for Kuku most of all, if we remained over another day to recover our lost strength. But my two *askari* told me that unless we proceeded on our way, they could not be responsible for the loyalty of my porters,

who would be tempted to desert, in view of the disaster we had met with and the long road that still lay in front. Acting on this advice I announced that we would make a start. I summoned old Mukuli and told him that I required a number of men to assist us on our further way. Four men were necessary for the hammock in which Kuku was to be carried, and other five or six men would be in requisition to take over the loads of those of my carriers who had been placed *hors de combat*. To five of my original company of porters I gave permission to return, paying them the money that was due to them. They were the man who had fallen into the fire, and four others who had suffered so severely, that it would have been the height of cruelty to demand further service of them. Old Mukuli, whose palm had been well greased, was eager to render assistance, and the bearers were forthcoming. With ten fresh men and twelve of the old carriers we set forth to reach our next camp, which lay at a distance of ten miles from Mukuli's town.

The distance was not great, but the way was difficult. First we passed over mountains, necessitating much climbing up and down. Then we reached thin forest, growing in a volcanic bed covered with a shallow layer of soil—very like the forests we had passed in the lava-fields to the east. Beyond this volcanic area lay broad, impassable swamps of reed and papyrus, the haunt of herds of elephant and buffalo. A 'strategical road' indeed! A 'strategical impasse' rather. After the swamps, the mountains. It was a long and heavy ascent, but on the summit we were rewarded by magnificent views of a mountain lake, which on some charts is called Lake Mokurru.

Arrived at our halting-place, called Marisi's, my first care was for Kuku. He was apparently no worse for the journey, and I found him a hut, and commended him to Suli's care. At the village of Marisi, who turned out to be a stout but prepossessing woman, we remained over a day, since some of my porters were not yet quite recovered from Saturday's experiences. On the Tuesday morning Kuku seemed decidedly better. He still refused food, but asked for coffee and cocoa, which I was glad to see him take. As a sign of improvement I remarked the old trading instinct revive in him, for he commenced bargaining with the local natives and disposing of some of the cotton goods which he had brought from

Uganda, giving the money realised into my charge for safe keeping.

On Wednesday morning we resumed our march, Kuku being in the machila. At noon we arrived at the next halt, Miyinga's. I had fallen a little behind, and when I got into the village the carriers had already laid the sick man down before the door of the hut destined for my accommodation. I looked at him, and he seemed worse. I felt his pulse, which was almost negligible. I then quickly prepared a stimulant and administered it. Suli looked on, shook his head, and said, 'Kuku bad.' We bore him into the kitchen hut, and placed him before the fire, covering him with blankets. But it was apparent that his heart had suffered too severe a shock. In less than half an hour he was dead.

The loss of my personal boy greatly affected me, following as it did so soon after the loss of Gongo the porter. Since February 1914, that is, for something more than a twelvemonth, he had been in my service, and had served me, on the whole, with fidelity and devotion. He was not the best of cooks, but on many occasions when I wanted a particular work done quickly and intelligently, he had proved himself both able and reliable. He suffered more frequently than Suli from attacks of malaria, and this no doubt weakened his system, so that when a great strain was imposed, as by the storm, he was unable to endure it.

We consigned him to earth that same afternoon. Though only Suli could understand anything, and he only a word here and there, I read over the grave a few sentences of Scripture; but my voice failed me and I had still more to shorten the short burial service. Only Suli and I—the sole Christians in that vast region—comprehended in the least what these graveside ceremonies signified. To the onlookers they must have seemed incantations, the utterance of mere formulas, calculated to placate the spirits of evil. But to us, who believe in the resurrection of the dead, what solace in those calm and uplifting words, what comfort in those promises, and in this Bible what light to illuminate for all time the darkness of the tomb. That servant of mine, who according to his light was obedient, willing and true, now rests in yonder solitary grave, three thousand miles from the banks of the Niger, his birthplace. 'Good and faithful servant' is the epitaph I fain would write upon his tombstone.

# CHAPTER XVIII

## WESTWARDS TO THE CONGO

I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man,
A motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things.

WORDSWORTH.

### *A Lake and a Torrent*

THE region to the west of the Kivu volcanoes consists of masses of mountains, rising to seven thousand feet above the sea, with deep valleys and dales separating them. In these deep clefts are found lakes and lakelets, and one of them, Lake Mokurru, merits special mention. In the maps of Stanley (1890) and Stuhlmann (1894) a large lake (called by Stanley 'Ozo Lake') is placed to the west of Lake Kivu, both writers informing us that it is so placed on information supplied by the Arabs. This, I surmise, is the sheet of water which I passed on the first days of March, and which I found marked in my chart of Belgian Congo as Lake Mokurru. It is not a broad, open sheet of water as the maps of Stanley and Stuhlmann would lead us to suppose, but a mountain lake, very long and narrow, that winds in and out among the mountains in a manner which reminded me strongly of Loch Katrine. Towards the south-east it is broader, and appeared to have a shore, but as we travelled westward the lake narrowed down continually, and looked like a great river winding in and out among lofty hills. I was unable to get down to its shores, which lay a thousand feet or more below the mountain-tops over which our path led, but I should judge that it

occupies a cleft of the earth similar to the Albertine Rift Valley, and, like that, due to volcanic action.

The region around Lake Mokurru is the most mountainous which it has been my lot to traverse in Africa. There are here no outcrops of rock, and no huge, towering cliffs. The mountains rise to a rounded top, and have slopes as steep as the roof of a house. In the vicinity of Lake Mokurru they are merely covered with tall grass, but further to the west both hillsides and valleys are well forested. Burns, streams, and rivers rushed foaming through the steep narrow valleys, and we had occasional difficulties in getting past these obstacles. The rain descended with great regularity every day, and the state of our steep and slippery path may be imagined. On leaving the village where my poor cook had died, we made a rapid descent to a river, now very much swollen by rain, which it took us an hour and a half to pass. Old Miyinga, the chief, kindly came to assist us to get across. A couple of stout swimmers first plunged in and carried a rope to the other shore. Then four or five of Miyinga's men, who were apparently accustomed to this kind of work, carried my loads across, holding on with one hand to the rope and with the other balancing the sixty-pound package on their head. Looking at them effecting the passage, it did not seem a difficult matter to retain one's footing in the swift current. But when Suli tried it his feet were swept away from under him, and if he had not retained a firm hold on the protecting rope, he must have been infallibly carried downstream. I divested myself of my garments and wanted to essay the passage, but my men laid restraining hands on me, and warned me that the water would sweep me away. So I allowed one of the muscular natives to take me on his shoulders and then, moving with great circumspection, we safely traversed the current. What with the delay at the passage of this river, the incredibly steep slopes, the treacherous path, and threatening rain, we accomplished only three miles as our day's march.

The next day, March 5, was the fifth day of our mountaineering exploits, and the most strenuous. On this portion of the route there was not, for many days on end, a bit of road fifty yards long that could by any stretch of the imagination be called level. The declivities were tremendously steep, so much so that I preferred clambering up to climbing down, the

strain upon the legs being so much greater in descent than in ascent. The villages we came across were all built on steep inclines; and it was a picturesque sight to see the path descend the slope, lose itself in the forest and thick grass of the valley, and then creep up the further side to a village into which you could almost toss a biscuit from where you stood. The women have a terrible time in carrying water up these precipitous heights to their eyrie-like homes on the hill-crests.

The natives of these parts call themselves Ba-tembo. They are agriculturists, and I noticed few cattle, though this lofty and healthy region is eminently adapted for cattle-raising. The slopes are clad with banana-groves, and in the valleys are gardens containing maize, beans, sweet potatoes, and millet. The Ba-tembo are a healthy and populous race. The large numbers of children in every village drew my particular attention, and infant mortality must be much lower among this mountain-dwelling people than among the riverine tribes. On one occasion, when carriers were scarce, the local chief supplied me with two women to complete the tale of porters. They shouldered the heaviest loads, and had stout, well-built figures, though their faces were unattractive. Men and women are better clothed here than is the case with the populations in the Welle basin, and even the children have a scrap of cloth about the loins. Ornaments are few, and artificial disfigurement of the face or body exceedingly rare.

I noticed, in one of the villages, the religious ceremonies which they perform when a storm threatens. The local priest (or his substitute) on such occasions fetches from a hut the requisite paraphernalia of magic. These consist of a little doll of wood, clothed in a monkey skin, and a calabash filled with maize pips. He brings them out into the village street, holding the calabash in his right hand and the doll in his left. Then he turns to the quarter from which the storm threatens, and vigorously shakes the calabash, which makes a deafening rattle. At the same time he raises aloft the *kambumbu*, as the doll is named, and invokes the storm-spirits. Some three or four men, armed with flutes of reed, accompany him, blowing continuously on their unmelodious instruments. Whenever the roll of the thunder is heard, the priest dances about in frenzied fashion, rattles his calabash, holds aloft the doll, and shouts prayers or imprecations at the approaching tempest. These ceremonies are continued

until the storm is upon them and the downpour commences, when the priest withdraws into his hut, the musicians disperse, and the proceedings terminate. They have done what they could to placate the demons who dwell in the lightning and the tempest. Such is the African's religion, not the worship of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, but the worship of evil spirits who inspire not love but fear, and who, unless propitiated by magical rites or by sacrifices of beer and flour, bring plagues and adversity, disease and death, over the hapless sons of men.

### *Nature at Peace and at War*

Apart from the toilsome road we had to traverse, which entailed not so much strenuous marching as fatiguing feats of mountaineering, the scenery was marvellously beautiful. Belgian Congo, for the greater part, has a flat and monotonous surface. A range of hills in the far west, running parallel to the coastline at a distance of twenty to two hundred miles, and a higher range of mountains in the far east, separating the Congo basin from the Albertine Rift Valley, and between these an immense plain, that once was beneath sea-level—this is the configuration of Congoland. After so many weeks and months amid the dead level of the Welle forests, it was a pleasure to travel in a part of the Congo colony which presented views a little more diversified. The steep slopes of the mountains are clothed with forest, which becomes denser and more impenetrable the further we journey. Palms are not plentiful, but I saw euphorbias, dracenæ, wild bananas, tree-ferns, lianas, creepers of every variety, and the usual assortment of forest giants. In addition to the vegetables and cereals mentioned, the natives plant a kind of arum with immense leaves ('collocasia arums'), the stem of which, peeled and boiled, forms a very acceptable dish. They prepare salt from a water-plant, which floats on the streams and sends down suckers into the pools in which it flourishes. When these plants have matured they are dried and burnt. The ashes are then placed in a funnel made from the leaf of a banana-tree, and water is poured over them. This water, caught in a small receptacle, is found to be strongly brackish, and is then evaporated, leaving behind a sediment that is an efficient substitute for salt. I preferred, however, not to

taste it, for a man who inadvertently swallowed two teaspoonfuls of this stuff was found dead in his hut next morning.

'The rain it raineth every day' was the melody which ran in my thoughts while struggling across these inhospitable mountains on the 'strategical way.' The days on which we had no shower in the afternoon were comparatively few. Day after day the same experience befell. We had reached our camping-place, and I had made myself as comfortable as possible in the apology for a rest-house which these natives—kind and friendly above the average—offered me. Towards five o'clock I would first notice far away the gathering of dark clouds, which presaged the thunderstorm. Gradually they approached, taking possession of the encompassing horizon, overspreading the smiling skies, blotting out the sun, and casting the mantle of oncoming night over a shivering world. The thunder peals more loudly, the lightning flashes more fiercely. At times it sends a fiery shaft down perpendicularly, and we hear a loud and mournful crash, as some ancient monarch of the forest is struck down, moaning and groaning, to earth. Anon it emits a broad horizontal blaze of light, which illuminates the world like the sun at noonday; and then in one swift moment we see a weird picture of dripping trees, bending palms, rushing streams, a gleaming road, ghostly huts and scurrying phantoms, with the drifting and minatory clouds overhead, reminding man in terrifying accents of his insignificance and utter helplessness. A fraction of a second only, and this panorama would disappear, swallowed up in the blackness of the all-embracing night.

The storm is now fairly upon us. Between the bursts of thunder we hear the dismal howl of the wind, and the dash of the rain against the thatch. All nature is in violent commotion.

> The wind, the tempest roaring high,
> The tumult of the tropic sky,

make furious assault upon our little hut. But the assaults fail, for though our hut is not founded upon a rock, it is securely tied together with green withes, and planted firmly in the clayey soil. But we have to hold our breath, notwithstanding. We peer into the gloom. A flash of light, and we perceive tall trees tossing their branches on high, as though they

waved a greeting to the storm-god, or perhaps desired to propitiate his wrath. But though the wind still rages and the rain descends, the brunt of the storm has passed. Then the wind subsides with curious suddenness, the noises without moderate, and we hear only the steady downpour. Presently even that ceases, and the sole sound that is still audible is the drip of the water from the eaves. Then a profound silence supervenes, which stands in vivid contrast to the furious rage of the elements which so recently assailed our ears. The air is cool and refreshing. A cicada creeps from his hiding-place and raises a feeble chirp; a toad from the pool replies in a deeper bass; other voices join in, and soon the whole midnight orchestra is sounding forth its melodies. Peace is restored; and the calm of nature without is reflected in your own breast. In happy, grateful frame of mind you seek your couch. Unconsciousness steals over you, and within a few minutes you are sunk in dreamless slumber.

### *Native Scenes and Customs*

The first Belgian *poste* which I reached after leaving Rutshuru was Masisi. The views from here were unequalled for quiet beauty by any station that I had yet seen. The buildings of this *poste* are erected on terraces, one above the other. The highest is that occupied by the office and dwelling-house of the *chef de poste*. The rest-house which was placed at my disposal is situated on the next terrace, and Monsieur le Chef, did he wish, could drop a pebble on my roof with ease and certainty. A broad roadway led from the *chef's* house down to the homes of the *askari*, who occupy both sides of this street quite in European style. Past my house, on lower terraces and on adjoining hill-tops lay the villages of the natives, sending up from a dozen fires thin columns of grey smoke into the motionless air. Beyond these villages was visible a wild confusion of hills and mountain ranges, running in no one direction, but tumbled about in picturesque fashion; while in the dim distance the horizon was bounded by a wooded line of heights that showed blue and purple through the haze. Masisi lies at an altitude, according to the *chef de poste*, of one thousand seven hundred and fifty metres, *i.e.* five thousand two hundred and fifty feet, and has practically no division of the year into a wet and a dry season. It rains

here, said the *chef*, continuously, and I had myself a taste of the unbroken moistness of the atmosphere, for on the afternoon of my arrival we had the customary torrential downpour.

I was glad of the two days' rest at Masisi, for I still felt the strain of the storm that caused the death of my two men, and was suffering from 'travellers' sores,' which attacked me, symmetrically, on both forefingers, causing great inconvenience. In other respects, too, I realised that my system was not working at full pressure, and that I dared not place too heavy a strain upon it. From Masisi to Walikale, so I was told, was a journey of seven days, but the *chef* could not comfort me by promising a better road, for in spite of the 'strategical way' the country between here and Walikale was only a degree less hilly and mountainous than that which I had passed through. Happily for me, after leaving Masisi we actually had a succession of fine days, so that the road, though steep as ever, was less smooth and soapy in surface than we were accustomed to.

The natives between Masisi and Walikale are Ba-nyanja. Their villages form a sort of street, the houses being built on both sides, but with less regularity than is the case with the Ba-tembo. Huts are of two shapes: the ordinary oblong hut with a pitch roof, and a curious, cigar-shaped construction, with the entrance not in the centre, but at the end which is lowest and narrowest. Alongside of the latter hut I observed tiny replicas of it, looking just like dolls' houses. They were, of course, spirit temples, attached to the hut for the worship of the guardian deities of the family. These spirits are placated with offerings which are placed upon small stands provided with a grass roof, each of which is about three and a half or four feet high. All along the roadway are seen, in the vicinity of villages, numerous strings attached to banana trees, and floating in the wind. Were they in a civilised environment, we would suppose them to be a device to scare the birds from the ripe crops, but in these heathen surroundings we know that they have a fetish significance, and are put up for the purpose of establishing a taboo. Strings supporting rings of woven grass, four inches in diameter, are frequently hung across the village street, also with the object of scaring away spirits of evil disposition.

These natives invariably carry their loads on the back,

with a stout bark rope (in which they are slung) attaching them to the forehead. I did not approve of this style of porterage, for at the end of the day's march I generally found the contents of the box all jumbled together at the one end; but my porters knew of no other method of carrying their loads, and I had to submit to the custom of the country. On these steep roads, indeed, no other method of burden-bearing is possible. Women carry baskets of bananas or grain in the same fashion, and if they are also burdened with an infant in arms, the baby is perched, for the time being, on the neck, with its chubby fingers in its mother's woolly curls. Strings of beads, of the large, flat variety, alternately black and white, are extensively worn, sometimes round the waist and sometimes round the neck. In addition to these ornaments, the women wear a small piece of cloth in front and a very large piece behind; and this custom goes down the whole sex gamut, diminishing steadily in size, until in two-year-old girls the garb has reached the vanishing point. The women are also very fond, here as elsewhere, of brass rings round upper arm and ankle. Many of the women are tattooed on the abdomen, but cicatrisation is rare. The men wear bits of cloth before and behind, and are generally armed with a spear. A curiously-shaped curved knife does duty here for the customary axe or the less-known cutlass of West Africa. Bananas form the staple food—raw, cooked, roasted, or ground into flour. Beans and sweet potatoes are also grown. The live-stock consists of goats and fowls, and a few cowardly curs, the most miserable specimens of the *Canidæ* to be found in all Africa—and that is saying a great deal!

The villages of these tribes all conform to a single type, which is very different to what is found in the rest of the continent. They are built, as I have already indicated, on both sides of a street, thirty to fifty feet broad. Near the centre of the village this street broadens out to permit of the construction of the palaver-house, which is merely a roof of grass on a support of poles. In this house sits the village chief, surrounded by the elders of the people, the younger men of the place, and, on the outskirts, a circle of the customary impertinent small boys. The gossip of the village is retailed here, and the men pass their time talking, eating, weaving a bit of matting, softening a monkey-skin, or smoking a gigantic pipe consisting of a single gourd. One pipe is sufficient for the

whole population. The chief begs a palmful of tobacco from his guest, and if he succeeds in obtaining it, the pipe is ordered to be fetched. A man rises from the group around the chief —I suppose he is the Hereditary Chief Pipe-bearer—proceeds to the chief's house, and emerges with that marvellous construction, the *village pipe*. The stem is a great fat gourd, which you can just encircle with both hands. At the widest bulge of the gourd a hole has been pierced, into which has been inserted a small reed, the size of an ordinary pipe-stem. This reed is surmounted with a miniature flowerpot, made of black pot-clay, which forms the bowl of the pipe. The Hereditary Chief Pipe-bearer presents the pipe to the chief, who places it between his feet and steadies it with his toes. Then he carefully fills the bowl with the priceless tobacco. Next he calls a small boy who scuttles off to the nearest hut, and returns rolling a live coal between his hardened palms. The chief takes hold, delicately, of this substitute for a lucifer, and cautiously adjusts it upon the top of the tobacco in the bowl. And then comes the critical moment in the operation. He applies his mouth to the further end of the gourd, takes a deep breath, then draws and draws and draws, inflating his cheeks to their fullest extent. Next he puffs out a cloud of smoke that darkens the hut, and breaks out in a violent paroxysm of coughing; after which he hands the pipe to the eldest of his councillors, who repeats the operation. And so the pipe passes from hand to hand, or rather from mouth to mouth, descending from the grey-beards to the young men, and from the young men to the small boys, by which time the tobacco is about exhausted, so that not much harm is done.

When the chief and his *entourage* see the white man approach, the former immediately rises and goes forward to welcome the stranger. He conducts you to the palaver-house, fetches you a *kiti* (or chair) to sit upon, and awaits your further orders. In my instance these were few: all I wanted was half a dozen fresh eggs, which had to be held up to the light, or, in more doubtful cases, immersed in a bowl of water, to make sure that they did not come from under a broody hen. After a rest of ten or twenty minutes, I resumed my march, the chief accompanying me to the end of his village, and taking leave with a polite military salute. Had I been able to converse with him there were a thousand interesting questions which

I could have asked, in which case this volume might have been a learned and valuable disquisition on anthropology, worthy a doctor's degree at the least, instead of being what it is, a slight and superficial travel-sketch. Another of the *might-have-beens* with which life's pathway is strewn.

## *The Trail of Islam*

From Walikale, which I left on the 19th March, it was a long pull to the next *poste*, Lubutu, the distance being approximately one hundred and thirty-six miles. Happily the road became progressively better the further eastward we travelled. For one thing, the aspect of the country undergoes a change, undulating country succeeding to the rough, mountainous region, to be itself succeeded by a level plain that stretches to the Lualaba. For another, the Government had built better roads, and supplied them with rest-houses at suitable distances, so that journeying became an easier matter, and greater comfort awaited us at the end of the day's march.

The further west we went the heavier was the population, and what was especially noticeable, the more distinct were the traces of Mohammedan influence. This is not the place to trace the rise and spread of Mohammedanism in East Africa. We need only remember that the island of Zanzibar was from early times a centre of Mohammedan religion and culture, and the great buttress of the slave-trade on the east coast. Thence came the Arab slave-traders, who pressed ever deeper into the heart of Africa. Thence came also that remarkable man Tippoo-Tib, whom Livingstone first met in 1867, and who was to play so important and so inauspicious a part in the history of the Eastern Congo. When Stanley was deputed by King Leopold of Belgium to arrange for the administration of the region around Stanley Falls, he realised at once that the feeble European Government had no power to assert its authority over against the Arabs, who had settled at Nyangwe on the Lualaba. He therefore took the bold step of appointing the most powerful of the Arab chiefs, Tippoo-Tib, as administrator over those territories. The experiment, however, did not succeed. It was setting the fox to watch the geese. Tippoo-Tib oppressed the natives, secretly encouraged the slave-traders, enriched and strengthened himself, and ultimately bade defiance to the European

authorities. This brought on a war with the Belgian Government, in which, after great inhumanities and much bloodshed, the slave-traders were defeated and their strongholds at Nyangwe and Kasongo destroyed. Thus was the Arab power broken; but the Mohammedan influence remains as strong as ever it was in these regions east of the Lualaba.

Near Walikale I travelled on one occasion through a series of neatly constructed towns. As I entered one of these a tall, shaven man in a flowing white garment approached me, who in appearance and manners formed a strong contrast to the ordinary type of unclothed native chiefs. On his head he wore a white turban, and his feet rested on the peculiar wooden sandal affected by Mohammedans, which we know in South Africa as *kaparrangs*. I gave him to understand that I wanted to purchase eggs, and he accordingly conducted me to his house, and courteously invited me to be seated on his *stoep* (*i.e.* verandah). This *stoep* was covered with mats and skins, and I perceived that it was also the household shrine, where the chief recited his prayers and performed his ceremonial washings. We finished our transaction; I paid my money, and departed with the eggs tied up in my handkerchief, the loadsmen being far behind, and I having no other safe place in which to bestow my purchases. After dealing with a man so polite and intelligent as this man was, I can quite understand, though I cannot justify, the position of a Government that says in effect, 'The Mohammedans stand at a much higher level than the ignorant and suspicious natives; they represent a higher stage of culture and religion; and it were far better to take away all authority from the stupid native, and entrust it to an intelligent Mohammedan.' The reasoning, however, is fallacious. So reasoned Stanley, when he appointed the shifty, greedy, and unscrupulous Tippoo-Tib as governor of the Falls, and prepared a harvest whose bitter fruit the Congo Government is still reaping to-day.

After passing Lubutu (4th April) we found ourselves in a level country, drained by the Lilu River, which we crossed by canoe on the 7th April. It was in this vicinity, though the exact spot is not known, that Emin Pasha was murdered at the instigation of the Arabs in October 1892. The relief of marching across a broad plain, after the incessant hill-climbing, was very welcome. I was growing utterly weary of the

march. And no wonder, for the distance which I covered between the shores of Lake Victoria and the banks of the Lualaba was over eight hundred miles, of which I walked six hundred. But the end was within sight. Day after day the country became more populous, the road more even, and food more expensive—sure sign that I was reaching a great trade artery. At length, on the 10th April, the long march was over. I saw the waters of the river, which Livingstone had reached at a point two hundred miles to the south, and down which Stanley had paddled when he discovered the great northern bend of the Congo. From Kirundu, which was the spot at which I first touched the Lualaba, I proceeded by canoe to Ponthierville, twenty-five miles downstream. Here I was in touch once again with civilisation. Between Ponthierville and Stanleyville stretches a series of rapids (known lower down as Stanley Falls) which are an effectual bar to navigation, and which have accordingly been bridged by a railway seventy-five miles in length, between the two townships. Ponthierville occupies a good situation, on a kind of peninsula on the left bank, and consists of a number of well-built edifices fronting the river, and forming behind a quadrangle shaded by mango trees and arranged in neatly kept parterres. Somewhat lower down, on the river bank, is situated the railway station. This is also the commercial quarter, with the shops and *magasins*. I left Ponthierville, after a stay of two days, under the impression that for picturesqueness of situation it would be hard to beat.

# CHAPTER XIX

## A THOUSAND MILES DOWN THE CONGO

Thick round me in the teeming mud
Brier and fern strove to the blood :
The hooked liana in his gin
Noosed his reluctant neighbours in.

Like frightened demons, with despair,
Competing branches pushed for air :
Green conquerors from overhead
Bestrode the bodies of their dead.

So hushed the woodland warfare goes
Unceasing : and the silent foes
Grapple and smother, strain and clasp
Without a cry, without a gasp.

Here also sound thy fans, O God,
Here too thy banners move abroad :
Forest and city, sea and shore,
And the whole earth, thy threshing-floor !

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### *A Mighty Waterway*

THE Congo River is one of the greatest assets, if not the very greatest, of the continent of Africa. Almost the whole of the vast area drained by this river is included in the Belgian Congo, and Belgium possesses in Africa nine hundred thousand square miles of territory, equivalent nearly to the area of Europe, excluding Russia and the Scandinavian and Iberian Peninsulas. Through this great and wealthy country the Congo wends its way, conveying to the Atlantic seaboard a mass of water second only to that of the Amazon. The total length of the Congo, from its most distance source, as the Chambesi River, near the north end of Lake Nyasa, down to its mouth at Boma, is fully three thousand miles. With its many tributaries it affords navigable waterways into the very heart of the interior amounting in all to six thousand miles. In the course of the main river alone there are said to be over

four thousand islands of considerable size, some fifty of them being over ten miles in length. Where the Ubangi, the great northern tributary, falls into the main river the breadth of the latter is about eight miles. These data will give my readers an inkling of the fact that we are not dealing here with an ordinary stream, but with one of the mighty rivers of the globe.

At various stages the course of the river is interrupted by rapids and cataracts. I have already referred to the range of mountains, known in the vicinity of the Congo mouth as Serro do Crystal, that runs parallel to the western seaboard of Africa. For centuries these mountains proved to be an insuperable barrier to the exploration of the Congo. Through this obstacle the Lower Congo railway now winds its way, and passengers and goods are easily and swiftly borne for two hundred and fifty miles from Matadi to Kinshasa. From the latter river port there is uninterrupted communication by water as far as Stanleyville, nearly a thousand miles away. The railway then carries you another seventy-five miles to avoid the Stanley Falls and the rapids immediately above them. Then follows another stretch of navigable river as far as Kindu, after which the railway has to be requisitioned for another two hundred miles, giving access to a final clear waterway which extends to the limit of the navigation at Bukama—a place which will soon be in direct railway communication with Cape Town. In all, the navigable portions of the main river total sixteen hundred miles. Then there is the large number of tributaries, with their own affluents, which, for a considerable portion of the year, are navigable for longer or shorter distances.

Stanleyville is a township of some pretensions to importance, and that there is a considerable volume of traffic passing through it, is vouched for by the fact that a branch of the Banque du Congo Belge is here established. The railway-station, unfortunately, and the administrative quarters are built on opposite banks of the river, which here flows pretty strongly. There is no regular ferry, and transit from the one bank to the other is dear and difficult—which is a serious handicap to the prosperity of any place. During my visit several large buildings were going up, and when these are completed and a proper highway runs along the river bank, the place will present a bold front to the river. At present

A RUBBER PLANTATION (BELGIAN CONGO)

the most conspicuous object is the large Roman Catholic church, belonging to the priests of the Sacred Heart (Mission du Sacré Cœur de Jésus).

I had fortunately not long to wait at Stanleyville, for two days after my arrival the fortnightly river-boat left for the Pool. I took my passage and went on board. There was a great crowd of passengers, and it was only with difficulty that I vindicated my right to a bunk, as another prospective voyager insisted that he had requested a friend to reserve it for him. Our vessel was the *Luxembourg*, of two hundred tons burden, which had acquired some renown through having been under German fire on the Ubangi at the commencement of the war. Our captain was a large-boned, friendly featured Swede, whom I first accosted in the Dutch language, but who confessed that besides his native tongue he spoke only French and English. The passengers were chiefly state functionaries, though there was also a sprinkling of traders and farmers. Several affirmed that they were Flemings, but when I addressed them in Dutch (which is precisely the same as Flemish), they seemed so ill at ease that I concluded that they had long forgotten their Flemish, or spoke it so imperfectly that they felt ashamed of it and preferred to make use of French. In South Africa we frequently meet with a similar phenomenon —that of young people, namely, who though born of parents who speak only Dutch, either cannot or will not make use of their mother-tongue.

The river at Stanleyville is about half a mile in breadth. The banks are low—not more than fifteen feet above the level of the stream. Native villages line the riverside, forming a regular street that stretches for half a mile or a mile at a time along the right or left shore. In addition to the Roman Catholics, of whom I have made mention, the Baptist Missionary Society, always in the van, has established two stations on this portion of the river, and another at Wayika, a hundred miles south of Ponthierville. An hour after leaving Stanleyville we passed one of these named Yakusu, situated on the right bank. Our boat made no stop, and all I saw was four fine buildings on the bank, the staff consisting, I believe, of two or three missionary families. This station was well known to me from an interesting book *Yakusu*, by one of the pioneers of this mission, the Rev. Sutton Smith, who has been since transferred, as I learnt to my regret, to the China field,

on account of persistent ill-health. The natives of these parts, the Lokele, suffered greatly during the period of the Arab domination, but when the Mohammedan strongholds fell, they crept out of their lurking-places in the dense jungle and the inaccessible bush, rebuilt their burnt villages, and entered upon a career of new prosperity. Mr. Sutton Smith testifies to the fact that Stanleyville had, on the whole, enlightened administrators, so that the Lokele suffered very little from the oppressions and extortions that in the case of some concessionaire companies created such great scandals. The day after sighting Yakusu we passed the other Baptist Mission-station, Yalemba, also without stopping. I experienced great regret at thus steaming past such important centres, but I had no alternative, if at least I was to complete my African journey within a reasonable time. The connections on the river, especially since the dislocation of regular traffic resulting from the war, are few and far between.

### *Visits to Bopoto and Bolobo*

We arrived at Lisala on the 18th April, and here I disembarked in order to visit the station of Bopoto (also known as Upoto), which lies a mile or two distant from the Government *poste*. I was welcomed here in hearty fashion by the Rev. and Mrs. William Forfeitt, as well as by my friend W. D. Reynolds, whose acquaintance I had made at Livingstone College in London. I hoped that in six or eight days' time a friendly steamer, proceeding down river, would pick me up, but I had in point of fact to remain over a fortnight at Bopoto before I could continue my journey. The time, however, did not hang heavily. I had many discussions on missionary methods and missionary policy with Mr. Forfeitt, who is one of the veterans of the B.M.S. in Congoland. At nights Reynolds and I, who lodged in the same building, engaged in endless theological and philosophical discussions. During the daytime Mr. Cook, the third missionary on the staff, would take me out to neighbouring villages, on evangelistic errand bent, while he told me on the way of the violent and unprovoked opposition of the Roman Catholics to their work. With Mr. Forfeitt, on one occasion, I had a long talk on the question of the 'Congo atrocities,' concerning which I was anxious to arrive at a just estimate of the truth. There is no

need to suspect Mr. Forfeitt of exaggerated language, for he is a man of quiet and deliberate speech, on whose judgment and veracity we may absolutely rely. He placed in my hands the notes he had made of evidence given by natives before the *substitut*, or local magistrate, in the preliminary trial of a European official for oppression, cruelty, and manslaughter. The evidence is decisive; and the official in question was sentenced by the Special Court at Boma to ten years' imprisonment with hard labour, though to the shame of the Government it must be added that he was released within two years. The case of this man, who was an officer in the Belgian army, named Arnold, is one out of many.

The Bopoto station occupies a fine situation on the north bank of the Congo. Through the intervening trees we look out across the broad bosom of the river. In midstream, a few hundred yards away, lies a long, heavily wooded islet. Up and down the stream ply the tiny canoes of the natives, while occasionally the hoot of a passing steamer is heard, every one of them, in a spirit of contrariety, going upstream, while I am anxiously looking out for a boat with its nose pointing west. Away in the distance, a mile or more off, is the southern shore, to which our missionaries make frequent journeys, since they have commenced work among the tribe that dwells there, though it speaks a different language to that of the north side. In the garden of the mission-station I found the following fruits: banana, pineapple, papayi, mango, avocado pear, guava (two kinds), orange, naartje (mandarin), lemon, citron, lime, pampelmoes (shaddock), sour soap, rose apple, loquat, Madeira cherry, walnut, date-palm, marakuga (passion-flower fruit), nsafu—in all twenty-one kinds. Such variety it will be hard to surpass.

One Saturday morning, while I was poring over *The Life and Letters of James Hinton*, Reynolds burst in shouting, 'Steamer's in.' In a moment all was confusion, while I forced books and clothing into trunks which had suddenly shrunk in dimensions, and hunted in all my pockets for keys that had incontinently vanished. However, boxes and trunks were ultimately closed down, I took a hasty farewell of my kind friends, made a rush for the mission barge, and in a few minutes was being swiftly paddled down the river to where the *Flanders* lay moored to the bank. It was a long wait before we actually steamed away. The heat was excessive.

Since leaving the regions of the Western Sudan I had not experienced such intense and enervating heat. The air was laden with hot moisture; the atmosphere was sultry; the sun was fierce; the rains were not yet. So long as the boat steamed along, one could always so adjust his chair as to get the benefit of the breeze which the steamer created by its passage; but in the confined cabins (happily all situated on the upper deck) it was a different matter. At nights I was generally bathed in perspiration, and I have been not infrequently awakened out of sleep by the trickling of the moisture down my face or breast.

On the *Flanders* we were not so crowded as on the *Luxembourg*, and the voyage down river passed without incident. These river-boats possess no saloon, and the passengers dine *al fresco* on deck. On booking you pay a moderate sum for your passage, but this amount does not include cabin or food. On disembarkation, the captain, who is also purser and general agent, presents you with a little bill, from which you learn that you are charged ten francs a day for your meals and five francs a night for your bunk. Bedding is not supplied with the latter item, but your personal boy obtains special permission to ascend the upper deck and spread your own mattress and bedclothes in the berth assigned you. The Government, or the company, as the case may be, reaps, it is needless to say, a nice little harvest over this transaction. Still, I make no complaint. It was infinitely better for me to dine at the general table, even though the food was not all that I desired, and even though I was compelled to pay for wine that I never drank, than to have my boy rushing around at every port of call trying to purchase a lean fowl for his hungry master.

The sixth day after leaving Bopoto we arrived at Bolobo, that important station of the B.M.S. which will always be associated with the name of 'Grenfell of the Congo.' Whatever stations and fields I had reluctantly to pass by, Bolobo I could not omit from my itinerary. Mr. Scrivener, one of the older missionaries of the Society, was my host at this station, though all the missionaries in turn invited me to partake of their hospitality on one day or another. Kinder host than Mr. Scrivener there is none in Africa. I hoped, vainly as before, for a speedy departure from Bolobo; but the days I spent here were in no sense a loss, as I strove to

add daily to my knowledge of local missionary methods, and of missionary principles in general.

The history of Bolobo extends back for more than a quarter of a century. It was Grenfell's home for sixteen years, and was the base from which he undertook many of those exploratory journeys which have made his name famous in the annals of African discovery. I was much interested in seeing the house which he built and occupied, and to learn from conversations with Mr. Scrivener more details about this remarkable and unassuming man.

Bolobo is the centre of great activities. The staff consisted, at the time of my visit, of three married couples, a widower (Mr. Scrivener) and two lady workers. The medical missionary was absent on furlough, but his place was ably filled, temporarily, by the nurse, though she too, unfortunately, was compelled to return home for an operation. A very important part of the missionary enterprise circles round the printing establishment, which year after year produces large quantities of reading-books, grammars, hymn-books, and portions of Scripture, in three or four Bantu languages. Here too is published, under the able editorship of Mr. Scrivener, the *Congo Mission News*, the quarterly organ of the conference of Protestant missionary societies of the Congo. The other missionaries have their hands equally full. Mr. Clark and Mr. Stonelake take turns in going alternately upon lengthy evangelistic journeys, and exercising control over the home-work, while Mr. Allan has charge of the school. There is also a boarding establishment for native girls, which is presided over by Miss de Hailes, who has a long career of faithful labour behind her. The extent of territory worked from Bolobo is immense; and since the station at Lukolela, a hundred miles up river, has been relinquished, the responsibility of the staff at Bolobo has been much increased. The present area controlled from this station, so I understood from Mr. Scrivener, is not less than one hundred by two hundred miles.

### *Learning Patience*

Of one thing I am perfectly convinced, namely, that the man or woman who suffers from a hasty and impatient temper must keep clear of Africa. The only country for individuals of such a temperament is a land where there are

telegraphs and posts, where express trains run according to schedule, and where impatient and irascible travellers can air their grievances in the long-suffering columns of the daily paper. In Central Africa these adjuncts to a well-ordered civilised community are wholly lacking. If your journeying programme is hopelessly disorganised by the non-appearance of your expected carriers, the dilatoriness of the overdue river boat, or any one of those moving accidents by flood and field which are inseparable concomitants of African travel, you have no redress. You cannot decide to dispense with carriers and adopt some other method of conveying your goods—there is no other! You cannot tender your ticket to the steamboat company and ask for a refund—that would be cutting off your nose to spite your face! On one or two occasions, when I experienced positive discourtesy at the hands of Belgian officials, I threatened to lodge a complaint with the high authorities at Boma; but when my irritation had cooled I reflected that my indictment would probably take two months to reach its destination, that a reply would be drawn up notifying me that my letter had been received, and was under consideration, which reply, if it ever reached me, would come to hand when I had quitted Belgian territory, and had probably forgotten that I ever suffered contumelious treatment from Belgian functionaries. And thus reflecting, I decided to keep a quiet tongue in my head, and in patience to endure what I could not by impatience cure.

At Bolobo I had to make another heavy draft upon my slender store of patience. Four days after my arrival the steamer *Lusanga*, one of the boats of Lever Brothers, of Port Sunlight fame, was expected. I was well pleased with the thought of getting away so soon, as I had been delayed at Bopoto far longer than I had anticipated. Moreover, the *Lusanga* was reputed to be the best-apportioned vessel on the river, and I was eager to make her acquaintance. She was expected on a certain day, and my trunks were all packed and corded for a rapid move down to the river bank so soon as her whistle should be heard. We sat at dinner, Mr. Scrivener and I. All at once there was a cry, 'Steamer in sight.' I sprang up from table, leaving the pudding untouched; my host summoned a number of lads, loaded my goods upon their heads and rushed them off to the landing-

place; I ran round to bid the friends farewell, and flew down to the shore. Alas! the steamer emitted three hoarse bellows, turned sharply to port, and steamed off down the broad river. I gazed after her, half in anger and half in sorrow; and then, summoning all my philosophy to fortify my sinking spirits, loaded my boxes on the heads of the sympathetic boys, and returned to console myself with cold pudding.

Mr. Scrivener tried to reassure me with the prospect of another steamer. 'Yes,' said I, 'but when?' 'Oh, in two days' time, or perhaps four, one never can say.' I am afraid I found Mr. Scrivener's comfort on a par with his cold pudding; but I tried to look cheerful, as a schoolboy will when back from the holidays. Now there stand on Mr. Scrivener's shelves nine red octavo volumes, not unknown to missionaries. They are the Reports of 'Edinburgh, 1910.' I also possess them, and had long desired to read them—a pious desire shared by most missionaries. Here, then, was my opportunity. So I procured an exercise book, laid my fountain-pen beside me on the table, and sat down to Volume I.

Next morning I was deeply immersed in my task, when I saw through the window an excited face, and heard the one word, *Steamer*. A faint whistle corroborated the news. I threw down my pen, closed the notebook, fell on my knees, and began the old task of bringing hydraulic pressure to bear upon the refractory lids of overflowing trunks. One of the missionaries rushed down to the landing-place, in order to attract the attention of the steamer by flag-wagging and a display of general excitement, and prevent her playing us the same trick as the late lamented *Lusanga*. Again I hastened to take a hasty farewell of my friends, and then scurried down to the shore. I saw a fine, roomy vessel, with decks as spick and span as those of a man-of-war, and I congratulated myself on being about to sail on such a boat. But the captain shook his head: he was going, he said, only as far as Kwamouth, and could not take me to the Pool. Another disappointment! Back with my fifteen parcels to the station! Back to the nine volumes of 'Edinburgh, 1910'! And this time there was no cold pudding to restore my equanimity, nor had Mr. Scrivener a drop more of consolation to administer. Eight days elapsed, sympathetic reader, before a steamer made its appearance that had both the grace to halt and the

courtesy to accommodate me, and my fortnight's stay at Bolobo came to an end.

### *Down to Stanley Pool*

On the 18th May I went on board the *Escaut*, a comfortable boat, in which for once there was plenty of room, and I actually had a cabin to myself. The journey from Bolobo to Kinshasa was extremely pleasant. The aspect of the land undergoes a complete transformation as we approach the Pool. Hitherto we have been voyaging over a broad stream, that widens out at times until it is several miles broad. From Bolobo onward the river runs swiftly between banks which are only some hundreds of yards distant from each other. Hitherto the bosom of the river was covered with islands, sometimes several miles in length, so that one could seldom be sure whether he was looking at the shores of an island or the bank of the river itself. From this point onward islands disappear and the banks stand out clear and unmistakable. Hitherto the country was perfectly flat, and the only landscape visible was the unending forest, coming down to the very edge of the water. From here and onward the country is hilly, with intermittent forest and great bare grassy slopes. The nearer we approach to the Pool the narrower does the channel become. The rushing waters force themselves through a range of hills which attain the height of six hundred or seven hundred feet. On the third day after our departure from Bolobo we discerned, so far as the prevailing haze permitted us, a broad sheet of water before. This was Stanley Pool. On our right was a high cliff of dazzling white, which Stanley christened 'Dover Cliffs,' only instead of being composed of chalk like its prototype, it consists of pure white sand, which is continually crumbling, and renders approach to the north bank a difficult matter for navigators.

Stanley Pool is somewhere about twenty-five miles long by fifteen broad. One large island and many smaller ones dot its surface. Floating water-plants such as on Lake Albert go to form the Nile *sudd*, drift about, combine together, form little islands, anchor themselves to a rock or a drifting log, and form a refuge for countless numbers of waterfowl. Fish is abundant, and explains the presence of the hoarse-throated eagle, the slender heron, the pelican with its outrageous bill, and the egret, so such sought after for its feathers. In the

reeds which fringe the shores are found the spur-winged goose, the wild duck, the stately crane and the nimble plover. Further west this variety of bird-life comes to an abrupt end. Here man has established his sway, has built towns, constructed railways, put up wharves and dockyards, and inaugurated vast enterprises. For it is on the banks of Stanley Pool that the pulse of Congo life beats most strongly—not at Boma, the administrative capital, nor at Matadi, the riverine port.

Three townships near the west end of the Pool bear tribute to its importance as the key to Congoland. We have, nearest the cataracts, Leopoldville, the Government centre; next, further to the east, Kinshasa, the commercial centre; and on the opposite side of the Pool, Brazzaville, the capital of the French Congo. Stanley Pool is the great base and distributing centre for the Belgian Congo and for French Equatorial Africa. To Stanley Pool all steamers destined to ply on the five or six thousand miles of waterway must be conveyed in sections, in order to be here put together, and hence to make their adventurous voyages to north and east and south. From Stanley Pool men and goods are forwarded northwards to Lake Chad and the sterile regions of the Sahara; eastwards to the remote *postes* on the Welle and Mbomu rivers, or to the inaccessible stations in the forests of 'Darkest Africa'; and southwards to the diamondiferous areas of Angola, lying around the headwaters of the Kwango and Kwilu rivers. The volume of trade which flows through Stanley Pool is increasing year by year. At first commerce was almost wholly in the hands of Belgian and Dutch firms, but of late years much English capital has been embarked in the country. The most powerful firm now trading in the Belgian Congo is that of Lever Brothers, of Port Sunlight. They have put into the country at least a million of money, and it may be even more. Their fleet of boats is the largest and best-equipped that ply on Congolese waters. They have built factories at various centres to tap productive areas, and have recently acquired from the Congo Government a tract of country one hundred kilometres square, for their sole exploitation. Their chief object is to secure an unstinted supply of palm-oil and palm-kernels, but nothing else that Congo fields and forests produce comes amiss to them—rubber, cocoa, gum copal, coffee, rice, or timber. The enter-

prise which this great firm displays is a corroborative guarantee for the security of Congo trade, and an indication of their confidence in the future of this wealthy colony.

### *The Three Townships of Stanley Pool*

Turn we now to examine these three townships in closer detail. Instead of establishing a single powerful base, the Belgian authorities have seen fit to build two separate towns, between which, I must suppose, prevails a certain amount of jealousy. Rivalry in the true sense of the term there cannot be, for Leopoldville contains the official, and Kinshasa the commercial element, of the community; but intercourse, except purely for business purposes, there is none. 'Bula Matadi,' for so the state and state officials generally are known, looks down on the merchant and the trader with contempt, which the latter, conscious of wealth and commercial influence, repays with feelings akin to resentment. Four miles is the distance between Leopoldville and Kinshasa, and this represents pretty accurately the degree of aloofness with which the former place regards the latter. Communications are possible by rail, by road, or by water. Some four or five trains run each way in the course of the day; many individuals prefer to travel by bicycle or push-car; and occasionally some one may be venturesome enough to go by barge or by canoe. The latter mode of locomotion is fraught with some risk, for close below Leopoldville begin the cataracts, into which your craft, if not strongly manned, may be easily swept.

Why there are two centres and not one is susceptible of easy explanation. It was at Leopoldville, which lies upon a slight rise commanding a view over the broad expanse of the Pool, that the Belgians first established themselves. But the proximity of the cataracts made it dangerous for boats and steamers, and this was felt to be a handicap. Accordingly, when trade increased, and the fleet of steamers that sailed the waters of the Congo and its tributaries multiplied, a more suitable site had to be selected, which was found at Kinshasa. This place lies in a plain, over which, at a period not so very remote, the waters of the Pool extended. Its site is not so picturesque as that of Leopoldville, and landward towards the plain it is positively ugly; but in matters commercial utility

must take precedence of beauty, and I am pretty sure that as the years pass Kinshasa will increase while Leopoldville decreases.

On the edge of the plain to which I have just referred stands the native quarter (universally known in South Africa as 'the location'). This section of the township has been very regularly laid out, and is maintained in a state of great neatness. I wish I could say the same of the European quarter, to which, by the way, Asiatics have free access. Lord Bryce has somewhere propounded the dictum: 'In Teuton America whatever is not white is black; in Latin America whatever is not black is white.' The Belgians have more affinity with the Latins than with the Teutons, and all through the Congo I noticed considerable obliteration of the colour line, which with us in South Africa is very distinctly drawn. It is due to this fact that Asiatics enjoy privileges which would not be accorded to them in a British colony. To return from this digression—Kinshasa is laid out in the most confused manner imaginable. Certain roads there are, lined with fine mango trees, but they lead no whither. One looks in vain for a central square round which the buildings are grouped with more or less of regularity. No public edifice has any proper approach to it. The post-cum-customs office might have been endowed with some dignity, had it been placed in a suitable setting. But it lies on the shore, half hidden among baobabs, and in order to reach it you wind along a moist alley, clamber over an obstructing line of tramway-rails, round a huge barrack-like structure, and are brought up sharp before your post-office. The railway-station, too, seems to have dropped casually from the skies, and to have only the slightest connection with the place it is supposed to serve. In the streets patronised by our Asiatic friends the houses and shops at least face the passer-by, but in the European quarter each man has been suffered to build how and where he pleases. The consequence is that the first house fronts the street politely, the next is in a huff, and only shows its cheek, the third is flatly discourteous and turns its back. I make no remark upon the variety of build, from the wattle-and-daub structure that is only intended to endure for a season or two, to the immense new hotel, three stories high, that fronts the Pool, and would do credit to any town in South Africa. Such strange contrasts are natural to young and growing communities.

But I think that the village board would do well to introduce some regularity into the streets and lanes while yet the vagaries to which I have referred are remediable.

Across the waters of the Pool lies Brazzaville, between which and Kinshasa there is a frequent service of steam-tugs. I snatched a morning during my stay at Kinshasa for a hasty run over to the French capital. There are some very fine buildings in Brazzaville. The two large and fully equipped hospitals, one for Europeans and one for natives, are a feature unknown in the Belgian Congo. The Government offices are commodious and comfortable. The Roman Catholics have an important work here, and their fine church and numerous mission buildings—all solid, large, and impressive, as the Catholics love to construct them—form one of the most attractive corners of Brazzaville. The Swedish Mission has also commenced a mission in this vicinity. This enterprise has, of course, met with the most strenuous opposition on the part of the Roman Catholics. Said the Catholic *supérieur* to the Swedish missionary: 'We have established four stations in the vicinity of your new outposts, but we have naturally not the slightest intention of hindering your work.' Could irony go further?

In walking through the streets of Brazzaville, which by the way are no more regular than those of Kinshasa, I could not help perceiving the difference between the two administrations. There has been no stint of money on the French side of the Pool. The great French Republic, which handles such a huge budget from year to year, can afford to sink more money in her colonies than little Belgium, whose responsibilities in Africa are too heavy for her slender strength. There is no prophesying what the issue of the world-conflict will be, but this may be confidently maintained, that if Belgium found it difficult to administrate her great colony effectively before the war, she will find it infinitely more so when peace has been restored, and she has to face the task of repairing the ravages within her borders.

### *To Matadi*

My stay in Kinshasa was very brief on the westward journey. There was a train leaving next morning, and as I was anxious to reach Matadi, where I expected home mails, I seized the first opportunity of going further. The distance

from Kinshasa to Matadi is less than two hundred and fifty miles, but the railway journey occupies two days, since the trains run in the daytime only. The halfway house is at Thysville, so-called after the able official who engineered the railroad to its conclusion at Leopoldville. There is a hotel, which charges according to Congo tariff, but the missionary traveller has a pleasant alternative. The Baptist Mission has established a hostel, supervised by one of its missionaries, Mr. Jennings, and his able wife, and here the tourist is provided, at slight expense, with board and lodging for the night, and an early breakfast before the departure of the train next morning.

I cannot say that I enjoyed travelling in the second-class coaches of the Matadi railway. The *voyageur* sits upon an uncomfortable revolving chair with a small table-flap to separate him from his *vis-à-vis*. Now the revolving chair is the ideal thing for the dinner-table on board an ocean liner, when the owner's tenure of his seat is uncertain, and circumstances may compel him to retire from table with more haste than dignity. But I hold that the revolving chair is quite out of place in a railway-coach, where the passenger seeks comfort first of all, and suitable support, not merely for the lower nine inches of his back, but for the whole of it. Moreover, everybody knows how utterly wearisome a railway journey becomes when the legs have to be held in the vertical position all day long, and how restful it is to have them up on the seat, though but for a brief period. Talk as you will, my American and Congolese friends, but I maintain that there is nothing like the long, comfortable, cushioned seats of our British, our Continental, and our Colonial trains.

In spite of revolving chairs, lack of suitable food and drink, and a few little privations of this kind, we steamed safely into Matadi in the late afternoon of the 22nd May 1915. I mention the date particularly, because it marks the completion of my second crossing of the continent. I had left Mombasa on the 18th December 1914, so that the second transverse tour took only five months, compared with the ten and a half of the first crossing. But then, as compared with the four thousand nine hundred and seven miles of the first trip, the present crossing ran to two thousand eight hundred and forty-five miles only, of which I accomplished one thousand two hundred and forty by boat or canoe, nine hundred by rail,

nearly six hundred on foot, and the remainder by other methods of transit. I was profoundly thankful to God for the protection vouchsafed to me on this journey, which had proved fatal to one of my boys; and it was extremely encouraging to learn, from letters that reached me at Matadi, that my progress was being followed with prayerful interest by many friends in South Africa. Who can say what I owe to such intercession?

Matadi is the rock-town. The name signifies rocks. The town is built upon rocks. The streets require no paving with asphalt or cement, for they are already paved with rock. Earthquakes hold no terrors for the inhabitants of Matadi: what are seismic convulsions to men who, like the conies, make their houses in the rocks? In vain do the winds blow and the floods come and beat upon their homes: they cannot fall, for they are founded upon a rock. It was rocks such as these with which Stanley had to battle, and through which he blasted a road for civilisation; and the natives, when they heard the violent explosions and saw the huge stones hurtling through the air, bestowed on the intrepid pathfinder the name which he ever after bore, *Bula Matadi*, breaker of rocks.

Stanley is no more. His work survives him. His name survives him; and the State for which he laboured is now known through the length and breadth of the Belgian Congo as *Bula Matadi*. That is a word to conjure with throughout the basin of the Congo. From the Governor-General at Boma to the gunsmith at Dungu, every functionary of the state is *Bula Matadi*. The white population of Congoland is divided into two sections—Bula Matadi and not-Bula Matadi. If you chance to belong to the former section, everybody and everything bows to your will. You travel first-class on the railways; you have the best cabin assigned you on the state boats; you have first claim on the native for his labour, his service, his hospitality. If you are not-Bula Matadi, you belong to a lower order of the *genus homo*. No captain need consult your comfort; no *chef de poste* is bound to further you on your way; no chief requires to render obedience to your orders—in short, you have just to fend for yourself. 'Great is Diana of the Ephesians!' 'Great is Bula Matadi of the Congolese!'

# CHAPTER XX

## THE REGIONS OF THE LOWER CONGO

Slowly the Bible of the race is writ,
And not on paper leaves nor leaves of stone;
Each age, each kindred, adds a verse to it,
Texts of despair or hope, of joy or moan.
While swings the sea, while mists the mountains shroud,
While thunder's surges burst on cliffs of cloud,
Still at the Prophet's feet the nations sit.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

### *The Lower Congo and Matadi*

THE course of the Congo from the Pool to Matadi lies between mountains which rise steeply to a height of fifteen hundred feet. The total distance is something over two hundred miles, of which less than seventy are partially navigable. For the rest of the distance there occurs a series of cataracts and rapids, where the water 'rushes in a series of ten-foot leaps, plunging into waves of a high velocity, wave dashing upon wave, and throwing the spray far into the air.' In a former geological period what is now the basin of the Congo was a vast lake, the surplus water of which found its way northward to Lake Chad, until in course of time the Congo lake burst its barriers and forced itself this passage to the Atlantic. If we remember that the Congo spreads out in its central reaches to a breadth of eight miles, we can realise the enormous volume of water that dashes tumultuously through these narrow gorges. The channel narrows at one place to less than one hundred and thirty yards in breadth, and the depth must be immense. Just below Matadi, soundings of three hundred and sixty feet have been obtained. On reaching the sea the waters of the Congo continue to flow in a channel which runs underneath the ocean for a distance of one hundred miles, and shows depths of four thousand feet—truly a remarkable tribute to the velocity of the current which the Congo sends into the Atlantic.

The town of Matadi, lying on its rocky slope and surrounded by hills which interrupt the free breezes that would come up from the seaboard, is excessively hot. The Baptist and Swedish Missions have fortunately secured concessions of ground at a turn of the river half a mile lower down, where there is generally a draught of air and the temperature is accordingly more bearable. In addition to these two societies, the American Baptists also possess a plot of ground in the township, so that missions are firmly established at Matadi. Not very far off to the east, on a lofty mountain, lies Palabala, one of the oldest stations of the A.B.F.M.S. (American Baptist Foreign Missionary Society), which has a number of out-stations in this region. The fact that three Protestant missions are settled in Matadi is to be accounted for by the consideration that Matadi is the front door of the Congo. Up to the Matadi wharves steamers of eight thousand tons can steam, and there discharge their cargoes and passengers. There is therefore a constant stream of passengers passing to and from the mission-stations in the distant interior, and a no less constant stream of goods destined for missionary consumption. Hence the necessity of placing at Matadi a staff that can deal with this traffic.

The properties of the Baptist and the Swedish Missions adjoin each other with not even a hedge or a wire fence to divide them—sure sign that they dwell together on the most amicable terms. During the five days of my sojourn at Matadi I was the guest of the former Mission. Its missionaries number two—Rev. W. Wooding, who at the time of my visit was undertaking the bookkeeping and general agency, and Rev. S. C. Gordon, upon whom devolves the duty of entertaining the guests who pass by. Mr. Gordon is a Jamaican, who after a preliminary academical course in his own island, was trained for the ministry at Spurgeon's Pastors' College. Of this good friend of mine I can testify that he is black but comely, and that he cares for the missionaries whom ocean boats disgorge, or the railway deposits at his doors, with fatherly concern. The homes of the Swedish and Baptist missionaries are pleasantly situated in bowers of trees which yield a grateful shade on the hottest day. Here seated, you can enjoy the light breeze which steals up the river when man and beast in Matadi lie panting and perspiring.

### *An Impudent Theft*

At Matadi an unwelcome incident befell which stands vividly engraved upon my memory. This was the theft of a trunk which I had brought with me from Kinshasa, where I left the bulk of my luggage to await my return from Matadi. It fell out on this wise. The building in which I was lodged fronts the river, and is divided into a number of rooms where passing guests are accommodated for a night or two. Higher up on the hill-slope some forty yards away is Mr. Gordon's house, in which the three of us (Wooding, Gordon, and I) took our meals. Whenever I had occasion to leave my room I took the precaution of locking the door and putting the key in my pocket. On a certain Sunday evening I did the same, but left one of the two windows of my apartment slightly open, in order that my close room might get the benefit of the cool evening breeze. The key of the room safely in my pocket, and the steel trunk (as usual) securely locked, I repaired to Gordon's for the evening meal. When dinner was over I strolled over to the Swedish Mission, where I sat talking for about an hour. It must have been near nine o'clock when I returned to my room, and retired for the night.

Next morning early my boy Suli was at the door, asking for money in order to purchase food. I had none in my purse, and therefore proceeded to the corner where lay my trunk, in order to obtain a fresh supply. There was no trunk. Somewhat astonished, I called out:

'Suli, where have you put my box?'

'No, sir,' said Suli, 'I no take him away.'

'Well, where is it, then? I don't see it anywhere.'

'No, sir, I no see him.'

'Well then,' said I, in some alarm, 'it must have been stolen.'

But though I spoke thus, I was loath to credit my own statement. I had twice crossed Africa, and had only lost tiny articles that lay ready to the purloining hand. Who could have removed a huge trunk out of a locked room without being observed?

I hastened over to Mr. Gordon's. It was quite early, and that gentleman was still in his bath.

'Have you had my trunk removed from my room?' I called to him through the closed door.

'No,' was the muffled answer; 'I know nothing about it.'

'Why then, it is stolen,' I cried.

'Stolen!' he said, opening the door an inch; 'and was there much in it?'

'Rather,' I said; 'in addition to camera, photos, films and clothing, all the money I possess, over two hundred pounds.'

The sable countenance of my good friend paled, if this expression be the right one for such a hue.

'That is a serious matter,' he remarked very gravely, 'and how did it happen?'

I explained the situation, and gave it as my opinion that the theft was committed while we sat at dinner the previous evening, or perhaps while I was away on my visit to the Swedes.

'Hardly then,' was Gordon's comment, 'for Mr. Wooding and I sat here on the verandah for more than an hour after dinner, so that we must have observed anything unusual occurring at your room.'

We repaired to my apartment to make a careful examination, *à la* Sherlock Holmes. It was perfectly clear that the thief had entered by the gable window: there were the prints of his toes distinctly showing against the white-washed wall. And here inside, look, are further white impressions as he tiptoed to the wall where stood the trunk. Plainly, he threw open the folding window, through which he made his entrance and his exit. Had he an accomplice? Possibly, for it is a difficult matter to lift a sixty-pound package through a window that is six feet above the level of the ground. But possibly not, for an accomplice would only double the chances of detection.

'We must go to the town at once and report the matter to the Chef de Police,' suggested Mr. Gordon.

'Certainly,' I rejoined, 'but not before we have had breakfast. It is a poor business hunting down a thief on an empty stomach.'

On this advice we acted, and after we had sufficiently fortified ourselves, made all haste to find the Commissaire and lay our sad case before him. But I was glad that I had insisted on breakfast first, for the day was hot and our interview with the Commissaire was an exhausting business. Neither Gordon nor I can plume ourselves on being first-class French scholars, so it took time to explain to our impatient inter-

locutor all the facts of the case. He was a sanguine and somewhat hasty young man, who knew all about the matter before your halting French sentence came to a full stop, and whose busy mind devised all sorts of theories as to the *how* and the *why* and the *who* of this theft, before he had even mastered the details. When we discovered that he was elaborating all kinds of speculative views which had only the remotest connection with the facts of the case, we tried, naturally, to curb his too vivid imagination, but our stammering speech could not keep pace with his loquacious flights. The worst was that he immediately decided that my faithful Suli, was, if not the actual thief, at any rate *particeps criminis*; and insisted on placing him in custody, to the immense indignation of my worthy boy, who exclaimed with hands uplifted to heaven, 'If I take your box, *where* I put him?'

The long day at length came to an end. The rusty machinery of Government search had been placed in operation, without revealing the identity or discovering the whereabouts of the culprit. The banks had been warned against accepting banknotes from doubtful sources. The shopkeepers had been requested to suspect natives who seemed to be supplied with unlimited cash. I did not place much reliance on these problematical methods of finding the thief, but what else could we do? When darkness arrived we were still *as you were*, and I cherished small hopes of seeing my two hundred pounds, my camera, or my irreplaceable films again. And so (as Pepys says) to bed.

Next morning early, while I was still at my toilet, I caught sight through the window of Mr. Gordon in the garden below.

'Good morning,' I called out to him; 'have you heard anything about the trunk?'

'I have heard something,' said the old gentleman.

'Well, what is it? Have you found it?'

'I have heard something,' he repeated; and not a word more would he say.

My patience was not to be tried very long, for in a minute or two I beheld a boy coming round the corner with a trunk very like the missing one upon his head. Was it my trunk? As he drew nearer I caught sight of the familiar P on the side, and my doubts vanished.

'Is there anything left inside?' I called out again to Mr. Gordon.

'A few things at the bottom,' was the cautious reply.

Never shall I forget my feelings as the iron box was carried up the verandah steps and placed before me. The lock had been forced—that I could have expected. I lifted the lid. Why, the trunk seemed to be as full as before. Ah, but I missed the bag of money that had lain on the top, containing, so far as I could remember, about seventy-five francs (£3) in Belgian money. I dived further in. Here was the cigar box in which I kept my paper money. I opened it, took out the envelope in which the banknotes were folded, and counted them. The money was all there. Yes, but at the very bottom was a purse containing fifty-five sovereigns in English money and two Bank of England notes for five pounds each. Surely the thief could not have overlooked such a haul as that! But no, here was the purse, and when I opened it I found all the money intact. As for the camera, and especially the films, which I valued almost more than the money—they were undisturbed. Besides the seventy-five francs in silver, the thief seemed to have been satisfied with my best suit of clothes, a 'solaro' shirt, and a pair of tennis trousers. Was there ever such a piece of luck! Or rather, was there ever such a gracious Providence!

'But, Mr. Gordon,' I cried, 'you said there were only a few things at the bottom!'

The sly old deceiver cast the slightest possible wink in my direction, and replied, 'I did not wish to raise any false hopes.'

### *Missions in the Lower Congo*

My readers, I am sure, do not wish to be wearied with historical data. 'Keep that,' they cry, 'for your history of African missions, when you see fit to inflict it upon us: but give us at present descriptions of country and people, and above all plenty of adventures.' I would greatly like to oblige you, good friends, but of real adventures I had few, and as for imaginary adventures, well, for one thing, my imagination is dull and inept, and not equal to the task of giving verisimilitude to things strange and improbable, and for another thing, the world has grown so small that the Sir John Mandevilles and Louis de Rougemonts of our day are hard put to it to

find a corner of the globe remote enough to be the scene of hypothetical adventures. All things considered, it seems to me that honesty is the best policy.

If you would understand something of mission work in Congoland, you must suffer me when I recall to your mind that Stanley made his way down the Congo River in 1877; that his magnificent journey awakened the greatest interest and enthusiasm; that at the instance of Leopold of Belgium an 'International Association' was called into being that had for its object the exploration and civilisation of Africa; and that the Christian Church was also swift to see and utilise its opportunity of planting the Gospel in the heart of the continent. As early as 1878 two societies made their appearance in the Congo. The one was called the 'Livingstone Inland Mission' and owed its inception to the late Dr. Grattan Guinness (the elder), but was subsequently absorbed by the A.B.F.M.S., already referred to above. The other was the Baptist Missionary Society, which first succeeded, through the munificence of the late Robert Arthington of Leeds, in reaching Stanley Pool and placing a steamer on the upper river. Seven years later the Swedish Missionary Society entered the field, followed by the Congo Balolo Mission, the Christian and Missionary Alliance, the American Presbyterian Congo Mission, and many others. To-day there are some fifteen or sixteen Protestant missionary bodies at work in the Congo, not counting the Roman Catholic missions which are found in every part of the territory.

Proportionately to the area covered, the largest number of missions and missionary stations is to be found in the region of the Lower Congo. This is not so much due to the fact that we have there the heaviest population, as that the missions that settled there followed the line of least resistance. The mountains between Matadi and the Pool were always a formidable obstacle to advance. Until the railway was completed, in 1898, traffic had to follow the road, which clambered over a succession of steep hills that lay at right angles to the line of progress. It was a difficult matter to obtain porters. The toilsome march, the exacting climate, the conditions of life, so different to those of temperate Europe, cut off many lives in the flush of health and vigour. An analysis of the first thirty men sent out by the Baptist Mission shows only two who died after comparatively long service (namely,

Grenfell and Bentley); three who died in less than ten years; eight who withdrew in consequence of ill-health; fifteen who survived for less than four years, the majority after not many months of labour; and only two (Weeks and Scrivener) who remain in the field until to-day.

Owing, then, to the inaccessibility of the Hinterland before 1898, the majority of missionary societies found fields of labour around the lower river. Few societies pierced a way into the interior, but those that did so have had remarkable results on their venture of faith. The American Presbyterian Mission in the Kasai region is one of the most successful in all Congoland; and the Congo Balolo Mission, which chose for its field the district lying in the basin of the Lulonga and Lopori rivers, has established a cluster of eight stations, on which thirty-seven missionaries are at work. I must not forget to mention the B.M.S., which held its eyes fixed steadily on the unreached interior, and aimed at a series of posts which should link up eventually with the work of the C.M.S. in Uganda, and of the L.M.S. on the banks of Lake Tanganyika.

The various Protestant bodies work together, I need hardly say, in the most complete harmony. Every two years they hold their General Missionary Conference, and in 1914 assembled for the seventh time in this fraternal fashion. In the Lower Congo districts, where the danger of congestion is not imaginary, they have delimited the areas of the different missions, and it is pleasing to note that in some cases a transference of stations has been arranged, in order to a better and more effective occupation of a given field. The two bodies which hold a common creed and a common form of self-government, namely, the B.M.S. and the A.B.F.M.S., have also established at Kimpesi, on the Matadi railway, a training institution for native evangelists and pastors, from which great things are expected. Hitherto evangelists have been trained on the different stations, and the local staff has been greatly overworked by being expected to take in hand this important work in addition to the multifarious duties of the ordinary missionary centre. Kimpesi has its out-schools and preaching stations, but its real *raison d'être* is to train men of proved character and ability for the native ministry. At the time of my visit there were nineteen students at the institution, most of them married men with their families. The course lasts three years, and the cost to the mission amounts

to something over twenty-five pounds per man for the course. These numbers might and ought to be very much greater, considering the great area which this institution is designed to serve; but the main difficulty is that of the medium of instruction. Congoland has a vast variety of tongues and dialects, and no one language has become as yet so distinctly predominant, that it can claim to be considered *the* ecclesiastical and educational language. Such a claim has indeed been preferred for Bangalla, the trade language of the rivers and the medium of communication between officials and native police; but this trade Bangalla is a Bantu tongue with all concords and prefix particles stripped away, and as such highly objectionable to literary purists. Meanwhile the instructors at Kimpesi make use of Ki-Kongo, which is universally understood, if not universally spoken, in the Lower Congo.

### *The Relations between Protestant and Catholic Missions*

I have said above that there is a congestion of Protestant mission work in the Lower Congo, and traced the reason for it to the barrier to progress raised by the Serra do Crystal mountains. But there is another reason. For many years Protestant missions experienced the utmost difficulty in obtaining from the administration the necessary concessions of ground to enable them to establish stations in the far interior. Time after time applications for sites were met with the objection that the districts in question were too unsettled, and that the administration could not think of granting the areas applied for. But in the meantime the wily Catholics were quietly taking possession of the land, and occupying the strategic positions. 'You will have gathered,' writes Grenfell to Mr. Baynes, the Secretary of the B.M.S., 'from my references to Roman Catholic missionaries, that we are face to face with forces which aim at minimising our influence at every possible point. In any country such opposition would be a serious factor, but in the Congo State, where Roman Catholic missionaries have the active support of the Government, it constitutes a difficulty which people in a really free country cannot understand.'

Protestant mission schools in the Congo receive not a cent from the Government in acknowledgment of the work which they do for the native, while between the years 1909 and 1913

Roman Catholic schools have received (according to information given to the Belgian parliament by the Colonial Minister) no less than one hundred and sixty thousand francs (£6400) in subsidies. All this is in direct contravention of the principles upon which the Congo Free State came into being. The sixth article of the constitution of that State imposed the duty of 'without distinction of creed or nation, protecting and favouring all religious . . . institutions and undertakings . . . which aim at instructing the natives and bringing home to them the blessings of civilisation. . . . Freedom of conscience and religious toleration are expressly guaranteed to the natives, no less than to subjects and foreigners; and the free exercise of all forms of divine worship, and the right to build edifices for religious purposes, and to organise religious missions to all creeds, shall not be limited or fettered in any way whatsoever.' Such is the law; but it must be confessed that, so far as concerns Protestant missions, it has been more honoured in the breach than the observance.

More than this: time after time it has occurred that in cases brought before the local *substitut* (magistrate), in which a Protestant and a Roman Catholic are involved, the former can seldom rely upon impartiality. This has been shown in numerous cases brought to my notice by various missionaries. The authorities who have to dispense justice are unfortunately as much under the influence of the Catholic hierarchy in the Belgian Congo as in other lands where Romanism is the prevailing religion. If these authorities venture—as they sometimes do—to pronounce a judgment by which the Roman Catholic Church, a Roman Catholic priest or a Roman Catholic catechist is involved in fine or punishment, they are made the objects of bitter persecution. To mention one case which came under my notice: a certain M. le Clercq, whom I met at Bopoto, ventured some years ago to sentence a Roman Catholic priest because of some crying misdeed—I believe it was maltreatment of a native woman, in consequence of which she ultimately died. The hierarchy never forgave le Clercq, but hounded him out of the country, and openly said that they would take good care that he never returned. Le Clercq himself is not a member of the Catholic Church, and this, coupled with the fact that his father is a man of influence in Belgium, encouraged him to brave the anger of the Roman Catholics and to defy their threats. He has returned to the

Belgian Congo, and when I met him was *substitut* at Lisalla, and more determined than ever to exercise inflexible and even-handed justice between white and black, between Catholic and Protestant. *O, si sic omnes!*

### *Matadi to Kinshasa*

It was Friday the 28th May 1915 when I left Matadi and embarked on my third crossing of the African continent. From Matadi I had sent my faithful Suli (rescued from the hands of the Commissaire after the happy discovery of my trunk) back to his home in Nigeria. I parted from him with real regret. I have never had a more cheerful, willing worker. He had his little faults—who has not ?—and incurred frequent rebukes, but on the whole he was a faithful and trustworthy servant and companion. After the death of Kuku he was the only one with whom I could hold some sort of intercourse, for after a time he learned to speak English fairly well, and though he was not of much use in suggesting a course of action in emergencies, he was at least always there when wanted. I sent him down to Boma, paid his passage to Lagos, and supplied him with money for the journey by rail to the Bauchi highlands, whence he was to make his way on foot to Ibi on the Benue.

Leaving Matadi as stated above, I called at Kimpesi, took the next train to Thysville, and remained over a Sunday at the latter place. Messrs. Thomas and Jennings, the missionaries here, have a fairly extensive out-station work, which adjoins the territory supervised from the well-known B.M.S. station Wathen. Those who are familiar with Bentley's work, *Pioneering on the Congo*, do not need to be told that Wathen is one of the most important of the B.M.S. stations in the Congo, with the largest membership of any. It is to the energy and devotion of Bentley himself that this result is chiefly due. I was sorry that the limited time at my disposal made it impossible for me to pay a visit to Wathen, which lies at a distance of two days' march from Thysville. Sona Bata, a station of the American Baptists lying halfway between Thysville and Kinshasa, I was able to visit. The hills around this place are somewhat better clad with forest than those which surround Thysville. The landscape is undulatory, and in its alternation of bare grass-covered hill and heavily

forested dale reminded me strongly of Uganda. The station was established in 1890, and now has forty-six out-schools and one thousand and twenty-five Church members. After eleven days' absence I returned to Kinshasa on the 1st June, having previously learned that the fortnightly steamer for the Kasai was due to sail on the 4th of the month. I shall have something to say presently about the rigidity with which these Congo boats adhere to the advertised time-table.

My stay in Kinshasa was a most interesting one. The hospitality which I enjoyed at the hands of Mr. and Mrs. Howell, and of Mr. and Dr. Daisy Longland, was unbounded. From Kinshasa as base I was able to make little tours of inspection to Leopoldville, where the Congo Balolo Mission have a small mission work and a considerable forwarding agency, and to Brazzaville, which has been already described. The fine church of the B.M.S. at Kinshasa, recently completed, is the gift of Sir William Lever of Port Sunlight. Services are conducted in the native language for the large number of blacks who occupy the native quarter, and are in the employ of the merchant firms, and in English for the benefit of the local Europeans, as well as for the considerable number of Sierra Leone men who have settled here. There is also an efficient little church in the native location, where the Gospel is preached by native evangelists under Mr. Howell's supervision. As in all centres where the native element is chiefly masculine and fugitive, the work at Kinshasa is a difficult and unfruitful toil; but when even a few have been won for Christ, the influence which they carry with them to their far-off homes is truly incalculable in its power for good.

# CHAPTER XXI

## THE KASAI AND ITS TRIBUTARIES

'You ask,' he said, 'what guide
Me through the trackless thickets led,
Through thick-stemmed woodlands rough and wide?'—
I found the water's bed.
The falling waters led me,
The foodful waters fed me;
The purple berries in the wood
Supplied me necessary food;
For Nature ever faithful is
To such as trust her faithfulness.

EMERSON.

### *Voyaging up the Kasai*

PUNCTUALITY, in Central Africa, is the thief of time. My readers will recall the fact that I reached Kinshasa on the 1st of June. I had made haste to curtail my stay in the Lower Congo, in order to catch the boat which was to leave for the Upper Kasai on the 4th of the month. As soon as I reached Kinshasa I betook myself to the office of the Marine, in order to make sure of the date of departure. It had been postponed to the 7th. 'Well,' I thought, 'that will at any rate give me Sunday the 6th with my friends of the B.M.S. There are plainly compensations in delays.' But when, next morning, I passed the Marine office, the notice-board announced in bold letters that the *Princesse Clémentine* would sail for Pania Mutombo and Kasai ports on Tuesday the 8th of June; and in the event it proved to be Wednesday the 9th before we got fairly away.

For two days we retraced our course on the main stream. Once again we passed the Dover Cliffs, leaving them on the present occasion to our left; once again we steamed between the narrow hills and against the swift current; once again I looked on the steep hillsides covered with tall grass, and marvelled to think that I had ever conceived of the Congo

regions as covered from north to south and from east to west with one vast impenetrable forest. On the second day after our departure we arrived at Kwamouth, where the waters of the Kasai empty themselves into the main stream. It requires no very great etymological acumen to discover that Kwamouth signifies the *embouchure* or mouth of the Kwa River, and under the latter name we understand the channel through which the Kwango, the Kwilu, the Fini, the Kasai and the Sankuru pour their volumes of water into the Congo. The peculiar 'Kwamouth' is a puzzler to the Belgians, and they therefore pronounce it *more Belgico—Kwamoet.*

This stream is the largest and most important of the Congo tributaries. The longest branch, the Kasai, takes its rise far in the south, where Belgian Congo, Portuguese Angola and British Rhodesia meet; it gathers into one the countless streams that flow from the watershed of the south, from the mountains of the west, and from the plains and marshes of the central regions of Congoland, and, reinforced by the Sankuru (also called the Lubilash), the Fini, which drains Lake Leopold, and the Kwango-Kwilu waters, joins the Congo with a flood that is little less in bulk than that of the chief stream. No one would, however, guess that the Kwa carries so much water, for at its mouth it is insignificant in width—I estimated it at five hundred yards—though the depth is very great.

The Kasai scenery is highly attractive, and the whole region through which we pass is, economically considered, one of the most valuable in the Belgian Congo. The landscape shows a very different aspect to that of the main river. During the thousand miles' voyage on the Congo, between Stanleyville and the Pool, one becomes weary of the monotonous views. You can distinguish no river banks, no margin of light-green grass, no fringe of graceful papyrus. For mile after mile you gaze at nothing but a stern barrier of dark and forbidding forest, that comes up to the extreme edge of the water, facing you with silent, mysterious threat, and saying, 'Keep off, keep off; and venture not into my dark domain, where hunger and thirst and wasting fever and violent death await you.' On the Kasai the scene is changed. We look with delight upon a quite different landscape. Instead of the lowering forest, the smiling hills; instead of the unbroken level of tree-tops, a diversified background of open hillside and wooded vale; instead of a view intercepted summarily at the river

banks, a long vista of undulating country, a horizon of blue hills, and long fleecy cloud-strips above. I can well believe that the natives who people the banks of the Kasai differ *toto cælo* in character and temperament from those who dwell along the Congo. Man is the creature of his environment. Geographical situation has had indisputable and powerful influence upon the formation of a nation's character. The contrast between the hardy Scandinavians and the languid Latins, for example, must be plain to the most purblind observer. And so it appears to me that the inhabitants of the sombre woods will necessarily acquire a temperament that is sombre and suspicious : they will be natural pessimists. The men who people these open hills and breezy heights, on the other hand, will be open, cheery, full of laughter and of song. They will be the optimists of the Congo tribes.

For a long distance above Kwamouth the Kasai flows between steep hills, which may rise to a height of five hundred feet. Then the channel broadens out; sandbanks become more frequent; many schools of hippos disport themselves in the waters; stately water-birds patrol the banks; huge lazy crocodiles lie basking in the sun. Sometimes the river widens out at its margins into broad expanses like miniature lakes, divided from the main current by a narrow spit of firm sand, on which from time to time we anchor for the night.

The Kasai regions have a very distinct commercial worth. For many years a trading concern known as the *Compagnie du Kasai* has been established here. Lever Brothers of Port Sunlight have sunk a fortune in the Congo, and hold valuable concessions in the Kasai region. In the southern portion of this district, and across the border in Portuguese territory, are diamond-bearing areas which are said to produce stones of small size but great purity. These areas are continuous with the diamondiferous districts of 'German South-West.' The right to exploit the country for diamonds and precious metals has been conceded to the *Société forestière et minière du Kasai*, or as it is mnemonically called, the *Forminière*. On board the *Princesse Clémentine* I had as fellow passengers five young Americans who were going out in connection with this Company, in the capacity of mining engineers, overseers and bookkeepers. It was pleasant to have intercourse with English-speaking friends after the unsatisfying dialogues which hitherto had been the order of the day, between Belgians

who understand but little Flemish, and a South African who understands but little French.

### *'Bound in shallows and in miseries'*

My experiences upon the great arteries of Africa—those mighty rivers that carry life and fertility to every part of its frame—do not belong to the happiest of my life. For one thing, in travelling twice across the continent from west to east, over against one tour from east to west, I had in almost every instance to ascend these rivers. Only from Stanleyville to the Pool did I taste the joy of travelling downstream: in the other cases it was always upstream. It was *up* the Benue, *up* the Ubangi, *up* the Welle, *up* the Kasai, and at a later stage *up* the Lualaba. Just towards the end of my long tour, when I reached the Zambesi, I had the pleasure, long untasted, of running with the stream. This is explicable by the fact, which is patent to any one who casts a glance at a physical map of the continent, that the greatest elevation of Africa lies near the east coast, but far from the west coast, so that the bulk of its waters find their way to the Atlantic, a very much smaller quantity through the Nile valley to the Mediterranean, and the rest through the Zambesi, and a number of smaller rivers, to the Indian Ocean.

Then, too, in journeying on the rivers of Africa, I somehow always chanced upon the dry season, when the water was low, sandbanks and snags numerous, and progress intolerably slow. This was my experience, the reader will remember, on the Niger; it was my experience again on the Benue; and I was to have similar experiences in journeying up the Kasai and Lualaba rivers. Our captain, on the *Princesse Clémentine*, was a Dane—a cautious mariner and a man of quiet and almost apologetic demeanour. So careful was he of his course, so faithful to his duties, that he barely allowed himself time to snatch a hasty meal, conversed as little as possible with the passengers, and remained at the telegraph from hour to hour, ready at any minute to signal 'full steam astern' to the engineer below. As often as we asked what progress we were making, he would shake his head in a dismal manner and mutter, 'Sand very bad; never seen river so low.' We tried to cheer him up by observing that at any rate we had never yet stuck fast; but his chin began to quiver with

NATIVE MARKET AT LUEBO (BELGIAN CONGO)

BRICKMAKING AT LUEBO

anxiety and he said, with an air of fixed gloom, 'But to-morrow, oh! to-morrow, very bad.' Happily our melancholy captain succeeded in putting off till to-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow, the final grand catastrophe, when we were to run aground and remain immovably fixed; and when we parted from him at the junction of the Sankuru and the Kasai, it was still *to-morrow*.

Here we were transferred to a very much smaller vessel called (most ineptly) the *Délivrance*. She had cabin room for only three passengers, and as we totalled thirteen whites, including two ladies, it may be imagined that the accommodation was most uncomfortably limited. The ladies with their respective spouses naturally took precedence, and entered into possession of the cabins. The rest of us stood, sat upon the handrail, or forced ourselves into the captain's cabin, for other seating accommodation there was none. The cinders from the funnel worked havoc on our clothes, our deck-chairs, our chop-boxes and luncheon-baskets; and on one occasion gained an entrance into a box of provisions packed with sawdust. The result was that during the night I was awakened by a series of explosions (for my couch was spread on the deck hard by), which I could only account for by thinking that the captain was firing a pistol to summon his men. Next morning we discovered that the sounds were caused by the explosion of tins of provision contained in the burning case. This was a sad and wholly gratuitous loss, which weighed on our spirits for at least a day and a night.

At the captain's table which stood between the helmsman and the telegraph, we took our meals in three relays. Our five American friends, who on the *Princesse Clémentine* had not failed to exercise the Anglo-Saxon privilege of grumbling, on the *Délivrance* 'sat down astonied,' like Nehemiah, and spoke regretfully of the 'palatial boat' which they had just quitted. However, the discomforts of the *Délivrance* would last, we were assured, for only three days and two nights, when we would arrive at our destination. But, *per contra*, the captain could not supply us with food, and it was a case of each one for himself. We went ashore to purchase the necessaries of life. There was nothing to be had—not a fowl, not an egg, not a papayi or a banana. Here was a fine lookout! Hoping the best, we loosed our cables and steamed away.

Our new captain was the exact opposite of the old. The Dane was a taciturn individual, whose drooping mouth displayed a sickly smile at rare intervals only; but the captain of the *Délivrance* was a young and irresponsible person, with a hearty and even boisterous manner, an infectious laugh, and a pipe which seldom left his mouth. The old captain took his duties seriously and sadly, rarely allowed himself to be drawn into conversation, and treated every sandbank with the caution due to a submarine of the latest and most dangerous German pattern. The new captain was seemingly never quite happy unless he was talking to one (and preferably to two or three) of his passengers, generally sat upon the taffrail with his back in the direction we were going, and cared less for hidden sand and snags than if they had been drifting straws. When we came unexpectedly bump upon a sandbank, nearly toppling over forward on our noses, the jovial captain would explode in a burst of joyous laughter, signal 'full speed astern' and blow clouds of tobacco smoke into the air. Under this commander, apparently, we could prepare for a more exciting if less prosperous time than under the lamented Dane.

During the first afternoon we made good progress. The telegraph stood steadily at 'full speed ahead,' the engineer piled on his fuel, the breezy captain inspired us all with his optimism, and we slipped through the water at a rare pace. Our friends from the States were overjoyed: at length we had got rid of that slowcoach of a Dane, and were driving along under a hustler. I smiled, but said nothing. Early on the second morning our troubles began. We ran the nose of our craft into a sandbank which seemed to have spread itself right across the channel. 'Full astern,' sounded the telegraph. Our boat remained motionless. 'Full ahead,' was the next command; but the only result was that we ploughed our way a little deeper into the sand. Then followed a series of violent but futile efforts to extricate ourselves. My readers know the story. My experiences on the Niger repeated themselves. Anchors were lifted into our little boat, carried off a distance of fifty yards, and hauling operations set in motion, while the paddle churned the water to foam and fury. This sort of thing went on at intervals all day. No sooner had we cast off the embrace of one sandbank than we fell upon another. Only when evening had come did we at

length find ourselves drifting freely below the obstructing wall of sand. We were free indeed, but the obstacle which had delayed us for ten hours still lay before. However, 'sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof'; and accordingly we tied up on the sandy shore, the ten of us who had no cabin accommodation sought a quiet spot for our stretchers, and having set our boys at work, we roamed about the clean sand to exercise our cramped legs. The days of our tour, I must here explain, were happily free from rain, else would our camping in the open have yielded us less of pleasure than of pain.

It is needless for me to describe at length the events of every day of this adventurous voyage. On the next morning a dense mist detained us until 9 A.M., when we at length drew away from the sands which had held us up for more than twenty-four hours. By a piece of undeserved luck we scraped over the sand-barrier, and then kept reasonably free of shoals till five that evening, when we fell aground and lay struggling till dark. On the following day our captain discovered another convenient sandbank on to which to run his boat, and there she would have lain, I verily believe, until this day, had not a small steamer called *Pitié de Hempthill* taken pity on our plight and hauled us off.

On the fifth day—vain and idle was the promise that said three days and two nights!—we reached the confluence of the Lulua with the Kasai. New difficulties and new trials awaited us. The channel became narrower and the current swifter. But the sand was as abundant and as variable as ever, and formed a never-ending hindrance to progress. The climax of our troubles was reached when the steering-gear struck work. Despite the united exertions of the captain and two helmsmen, our craft took the bit in its teeth, shied to the right, and dashed violently into the bank, demolishing trees, tearing down huge branches, littering our tiny quarter-deck with leaves, and covering us with a species of peculiarly voracious ants. With immense trouble our crooked rudder was straightened out, the American engineers rendering yeoman service in this toil, and we steamed forward. But the obstructing sand lay everywhere, and seemed determined to put a period to all further advance. We tried to discover a channel here, and to force a passage there, but our captain's navigation being of a highly erratic character, he only

succeeded in throwing us athwart the rapid stream, which drove us determinedly on to the very sandbank which we were seeking to avoid. So here we lay immovable in midstream. Attempts at extrication continued unavailingly until midnight, the moon being in the third quarter. Next morning, by fixing cables to the trees ashore, we managed to get our boat afloat, and resumed our voyage, leaving an unmanageable barge with six tons of cargo safely moored to the bank, to await better conditions of navigation. On the sixth day after our transference to the *Délivrance* we were washed on to another sandspit, and exposed to the force of a strong current that heeled us over, and sent us deeper and more inextricably into the arms of the too-affectionate sand. Our crew were by this time quite exhausted with all the strenuous toil of the last few days; courage had ebbed; weariness and sullenness marked their mien; even the irrepressible captain was quieter, though his pipe glowed as cheerily as before. We were all in a subdued and chastened frame of mind. Our food was finished; our hope had flown; our vocabulary of vituperation was exhausted; brooding despair had marked us for her own. Under such lugubrious and desperate circumstances there was nothing to do but to send distress messages to Luebo, now no longer very far distant. On the following day relief arrived in the form of two or three capacious *baleinières*, which lightened us of our cargo, and enabled us to get away. We reached Luebo on the 29th June, having been six nights and seven days on the miscalled *Délivrance*.

### *The Luebo Mission*

At Luebo I spent six most pleasant and profitable days. The A.P.C.M. (American Presbyterian Congo Mission) which is established here is one of the most important of the Congo missions. The pioneers of this enterprise took the wise step of pressing at once into the interior and selecting a field with a homogeneous people and a common language. And the results of a quarter of a century of toil fully justify their prescience. Luebo is the centre of a heavy population, which is easily reached and can be efficiently worked. With the lapse of years the population at and around Luebo has steadily increased in numbers, since the vicinity of the mission offered security to tribes and individuals who were ravaged by war

and exposed to the brigandage of the Zappo-zaps (or Basongi, a tribe east of the Sankuru). After a time the Government became jealous of the influence which the Mission had acquired, and tried in various manners to undermine it. One method was, the attempt to disperse the people to their original homes, an attempt which was only foiled by the vigilance and firmness of Dr. Morrison, the head of the A.P.C.M. Another method which has had better success was the transference of the State offices to the left bank of the Lulua River, and the erection of a fine Roman Catholic church, in consequence of which some five thousand people have been drawn away from the immediate proximity of the American Mission. The latter, however, remains in possession of the original site on the right bank, with some ten thousand or twelve thousand individuals, and carries on at the same time a work among those of its converts who have moved to the other side.

Our American brethren have methods which differ in some respects from those in vogue in other missions. Comparing, for example, their stations with those of other societies, we notice that they are less concerned about erecting buildings of great solidity and permanence, and are satisfied if they can obtain comfort and general efficiency. Their homes, in general, are of wattle-and-daub; the great church at Luebo, seating twelve hundred or fifteen hundred people, is nothing but a shed, without walls, but with a vast roof, that extends over its supports as a broad verandah. At the same time I must say that preparations are under way for the erection of brick buildings. A brick hospital, too, was nearing completion during my visit, and scores of thousands of bricks were being made for other permanent buildings, among which the new church stands prominent on the programme.

Another characteristic of the mission methods of the A.P.C.M. is the responsibility which is cast from the outset upon the shoulders of the native Church and the native converts. The Church is expected to support its own evangelists and teachers, that goes without saying. But more, it is encouraged to take a large share in governing itself. The elders of the congregation, to take an illustration, discuss cases of discipline and impose sentences without consultation with the chief missionary, though appeal is permissible to the session, with the missionary as chairman. Again, the evangelists form a body to which is committed the supervision of

evangelistic work in all its ramifications; and only in difficult matters do they approach the missionary for his assistance and advice. By these means interest in the work is stimulated, a spirit of self-reliance is cultivated, and the natives learn by practical endeavour that the ultimate aim of the Mission is to call into being a native Church that is self-supporting, self-directing and self-propagating. It is possible that the suspicion may arise in some minds that the A.P.C.M. is entrusting its converts with large responsibilities at too early a stage, and that those called to rule before they are fit for the task are bound to make many mistakes. Of course they will make mistakes, but, as some one has wisely said, 'He who never makes a mistake in his life will never make anything at all of his life.'

There is a large staff of workers at Luebo, and every one is fully occupied. The population, as I have indicated, is heavy, and Dr. Morrison estimates that there must be some eighteen thousand persons settled within a radius of three miles of Luebo. The Mission itself has gathered a total of more than twelve thousand church members, of whom a goodly proportion belong to Luebo itself. The staff of workers must accordingly be a strong one; and at the time of my visit I found no less than fourteen men and women at work—Dr. Morrison himself, Mr. and Mrs. Allen at the school and the training institute, Dr. Stixrud and Nurse Fair at the hospital, Mr. Vinson at the store, Mr. Mackinnon at the Industrial department, Mr. Damaury at the printing-office, Mr. Hillhouse at the bricklaying, Mr. Scott at the sawmill, Mr. Edmiston at the gardening, and Mrs. Edmiston (a graduate of Fisk University, U.S.A.) in charge of the girls. When to these are added the wives of Mr. Mackinnon and Mr. Scott, we find that the American community at Luebo is of considerable size.

Mr. Scott, as his name would seem to imply, hails from the north of the Tweed. He is a qualified engineer, and has charge of the mission steamer *Lapsley*, which when I passed lay helpless on the river, since her draught is so great that she can only run during a few months of the year. It was a pleasure to meet Mr. Hillhouse, who in former years acquired a competency as builder and contractor in the States, but who, feeling drawn to mission work, provided for those who were dependent upon him, and then, at the age of fifty-two, offered

his services to the A.P.C.M., and is now labouring in the mission field at his own expense. Would that there were more Christian laymen of this stamp, willing to devote their strength and their substance to the great Cause, and leaving home and kindred, to come out to that field of labour which offers such noble employment for our time and our talents.

### *Dr. Morrison on Trial*

Around the head of the devoted Dr. Morrison many storms have raged. He was one of the first to draw attention to the atrocities committed under the Leopoldian régime, and for this he incurred a full measure of obloquy. At a subsequent date he came into collision with the Compagnie du Kasai, one of the concessionaire companies trading in these regions. The trouble arose in the following manner. As editor of the *Kasai Herald* Dr. Morrison had published, in 1909, an account by Mr. Sheppard, one of the A.P.C.M. missionaries, of a visit to some of the out-stations, in which account he referred to the depopulation of the country owing to the cruelties and extortions to which the natives had been subjected by the companies who were bent on rubber exploitation. This statement the Compagnie du Kasai applied to themselves, and forthwith instituted an action for libel against Dr. Morrison and Mr. Sheppard, claiming damages to the extent of eighty thousand francs (£3200). The case awakened widespread interest. Dr. Morrison and his fellow-missionaries spent a long time in collecting evidence. It required no little persuasion to find witnesses who were willing to go down the river to Leopoldville, and give their evidence before the all-powerful *Bula Matadi*. M. Vandevelde, the famous Belgian socialist, and one of the ablest advocates practising at the Belgian Bar, on hearing of this action, offered to come out to the Congo and plead the case of the missionaries, provided only his out-of-pocket expenses were borne. The Governments of England and of the United States delegated special consuls to journey to the Congo, and attend the trial, which was recognised as being of international importance.

When the trial drew near the Compagnie du Kasai began to hesitate, and were it not too late would have withdrawn the case. The presence of two special consuls on behalf of two of the great powers, and the advocacy of Vandevelde,

than whom (except the king) there was no more powerful and influential man in Belgium, was more than they bargained for. The day of the trial came. The population of Leopoldville and Kinshasa could speak of nothing else. The plaintiffs laid their case before the court; but they were too uncertain of their cause to touch the real points at issue. They neither brought any evidence themselves, nor permitted Vandevelde to call up the witnesses brought by Dr. Morrison. The chief charge was now that Dr. Morrison was using his influence to overthrow the Government and bring in the English rule, and that he had written a letter to Consul Thesiger at Boma inviting him to visit the Kasai, and hinting at the necessity for a change of government. At this stage Vandevelde rose. 'Produce the letter,' he said.

The advocate for the plaintiffs fumbled among his papers, but could find no copy of the letter in question. No wonder: such a letter had never been written. From that point the attack crumbled. An attempt to show that, even had there been grievances against the methods of the Compagnie du Kasai, the journal of the A.P.C.M. was not the place in which to air them, failed as lamentably as the attempt to blacken the personal character of Dr. Morrison. The judgment of the court could have been foreseen. It held that the defendants were perfectly justified 'in bringing to light the unhappy condition of the natives, and in making known the existence of abuses which are veritable crimes against the liberty of work which the native possesses.' The Compagnie du Kasai lost their case and were condemned to pay the costs of the action, which were exceptionally heavy.

I need hardly say that the prestige of the A.P.C.M. stands very high, not only among the natives, but also among the Government functionaries, who are now beginning to recognise the lofty ideals by which Dr. Morrison and his co-workers are animated. The A.P.C.M. is the enterprise of the Presbyterian Church of the Southern States of America. On its staff are not a few people of colour, who work together most harmoniously with the white missionaries, and stand in every respect on a social equality with them. I cannot help thinking that the experience which Dr. Morrison and his colleagues have had in their own South as to the relationship of whites and negroes, stands them in good stead in determining their attitude to the natives of the Kasai. There is a great future

in store for the A.P.C.M. The language which they use, the Chi-luba, is widely spoken; their native workers are an enthusiastic body of men; the church which has been established as the result of their labours is self-reliant and full of fervour; and there is small doubt but that this work, under the blessing of God, is destined to become one of the most permanent of African missionary enterprises.

### *Overland to the Sankuru*

From Luebo I commenced my overland *trek* to the Lualaba. By this time I had had enough of sandbank exploration, and I coveted no closer acquaintance with the Lulua and Kasai rivers. I decided, accordingly, to take the trail to Lusambo (on the Sankuru), and travel by way of Mutoto, so that I would thus be able to visit two other stations of the A.P.C.M. I parted from the Luebo friends with real regret, and still look back with feelings of the liveliest gratitude and pleasure to the time spent with them. When I took my departure on the 5th July, Dr. Morrison not only provided me with carriers, but refused to accept remuneration for their services, and had me conveyed for five days to Mutoto as the guest of the Mission.

The day of our departure was a cool one, the sun hardly once showing his face. Large numbers of women passed us on the road, bound for the market at Luebo. The natives evidently belong to more than one tribe, as was to be expected when we remember that Luebo was a refuge for fugitives from the cruelties of the Zappo-zaps. The soil is fertile and money is apparently plentiful, so that the men are generally well clothed in shirt and trousers; but the women, always the conservative element in the community, are frequently satisfied with a scrap of cloth before and a larger square behind. Circumcision is practised by this people, but it seems to stand in no connection with manhood ceremonies, and is performed on little boys and infants. The natives build square houses with hipped roofs. In most of the villages through which I passed there was a shed representing the school of the Protestant or the Roman Catholic Mission; and sometimes both divisions of the Christian Church were represented. In the distinctively Christian villages the number of children was very large, forming a powerful argument for monogamy.

Domestic animals are sheep, goats, chickens, ducks, pigeons, and dogs. The ram of the above breed of sheep has a thick, heavy mane on the under side of the neck, from between the forelegs to the chin. Heathenism is, of course, still very prevalent, and the natives are much addicted to the use of charms and amulets. It is a common sight to see an earthenware pot placed upon a forked stick in the midst of the village, or immediately in front of a house which its owner supposes to be particularly exposed to the malign influence of evil spirits. Elsewhere may be frequently seen a large conch adorned with a few feathers, which hangs suspended from a bent pole, and sways to and fro in the breeze. This is regarded as a powerful charm. The Ba-luba and Ba-lulua have numbers of fetishes in the form of human beings. In many villages I saw idols carved of wood—a somewhat uncommon sight among Bantu natives, though frequent enough among the true negroes of the West Coast.

Mutoto lies at a distance of something over a hundred miles from Luebo. Here I remained for a Saturday and Sunday, as the guest of Mr. Rochester and Mr. Plumer Smith. The name of this station signifies *star*, and was the designation bestowed by the natives upon the late wife of Dr. Morrison. This talented lady spent but a brief four years in the mission field, and was called away to higher work just as she was preparing to go with her husband on furlough. She lies buried under the palms at Luebo, while her memory is perpetuated in the station of Mutoto. The work is very promising. At the Sabbath services there were quite six hundred present, and the relationship between the natives and their missionaries seemed to be of the happiest. Early on the Monday morning I set out on my journey towards the rising sun. The level country which we had passed through on our way hither now underwent a gradual change, and became more and more undulatory, until on nearing the Sankuru we were fairly in among the hills, clambering up steep slopes and making swift descents into deep valleys.

The natives of these parts, chiefly Ba-lulua, are very industrious, weaving mats, making baskets, growing manioc, sweet potatoes, beans, maize, and tomatoes, and raising sheep, goats, pigs, fowls, ducks, and pigeons. Their houses are of a quite superior make, and reveal many signs of artistic talent in the devices with which the walls are decorated. The Ba-

MURAL ORNAMENTATION OF THE BASONGI (BELGIAN CONGO)

AN IDOL OF THE BASONGI (BELGIAN CONGO)

lulua certainly cannot be called timid or sheepish. At one place where I halted they simply thronged about me for medicine and surgical treatment, and I verily believe that in the course of the afternoon I treated fifty patients.

Four days after leaving Mutoto we came in sight of the Sankuru, which we crossed by ferry to the station of the A.P.C.M., lying a mile or two from Lusambo on the right bank. Mr. and Mrs. Sieg extended the greatest kindness to me during my detention here, and I was also privileged to meet Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland, who, however, left Lusambo the next day. Considerable difficulties surround the work at this centre. The A.P.C.M. established themselves here long after the Roman Catholics had commenced work, driven to do so because many of their converts from west of the Sankuru settled at Lusambo, as wage-earners in the employ of the Government or the traders. It need hardly be said that the Catholics bitterly resented this entrance upon a field which they conceived to be peculiarly their own preserve, and have done all in their power to hinder the work and cast suspicion upon the motives of the Protestant missionaries. In spite of all opposition, however, the A.P.C.M. are making progress, and on the Sunday an attentive audience of two hundred people gathered in the little church-shed. In my opinion the labourers in this field have nothing to be despondent about, but much to rejoice at, for the work impressed me as showing great promise.

At Lusambo I took leave of my kind and hospitable friends of the American Mission. It was parting not merely from the last missionaries whom I should see for many days, but also, in a sense, from civilisation. For Lusambo has an importance all its own. It is in direct touch with the outside world, by means of the recently erected Marconi apparatus. The very first message which was received was that which brought the news of the declaration of war; and the irony of the situation was this, that the most tragic piece of news which the twentieth century is likely to hear, was regarded in Lusambo as a capital joke, palmed off upon them by the operator at Leopoldville. In leaving Lusambo I was severing the last link which united me to the great world without, and plunging once more into the solitude and isolation of the forest and the plain.

# CHAPTER XXII

## CENTRAL CONGOLAND FROM WEST TO EAST

Give to me the life I love,
  Let the lave go by me,
Give the jolly heaven above,
  And the byway nigh me.
Bed in the bush with stars to see,
  Bread I dip in the river—
There 's the life for a man like me,
  There 's the life for ever.

Let the blow fall soon or late,
  Let what will be o'er me;
Give the face of earth around
  And the road before me.
Wealth I seek not, hope nor love,
  Not a friend to know me;
All I seek, the heaven above
  And the road below me.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON.

### *Along the Sankuru*

ALONG the basin of the Sankuru, otherwise called the Lubilash, we travel through beautiful landscapes. The country generally has a sandy superficies, but the course of the river is bounded by great walls of rock, which are crowned with rich forest and a wealth of tropical vegetation. On leaving Lusambo we journeyed in easterly direction along the south bank of the river. The road lay through a succession of woods, intercepted by steep ravines, and though it was delightful marching through the long, solemn forest aisles, I began at length to weary of the strenuous exercise. The Sankuru here makes a great bend, flowing first from south to north, and then from east to west, and as we were heading due east, we soon began to draw away from the river. The face of the country then quickly changed, forest was found only in the deep moist valleys, bare grassy hillsides sloped before us, and grateful shade was succeeded by blazing, ener-

vating sunshine. Finally we came upon a broad plateau, covered with fresh green grass, that stretched from our feet to the dip of the horizon. Here I felt at home. This rolling plain reminded me of the grassy steppes of the Free State in which I spent nearly five happy and busy years. The air, though hot, was not sultry, the road was reasonably level, the open view was heart-enlarging. We moved briskly across the illimitable prairie, and without sensible fatigue.

But where are the herds of cattle with which these plains ought to be covered? This was the question which I was constantly asking myself. If I could trust my judgment, this region must be eminently adapted for cattle-raising. No fly could harbour on these lofty open stretches, for neither wood nor marsh were anywhere visible. And yet with all my searching I could discover no herds grazing on these hillsides, nor the presence of antelopes, nor any signs of elephant. Even native villages were few and far between. I wonder if the silence and the emptiness of these broad spaces are due to the ravages of the fierce Zappo-zaps, who created a solitude and called it peace.

I undertook my journey across Central Congoland unprovided with a tent, in the hopes that the weather might prove to be propitious, and that I would find in most villages some sort of accommodation. In both respects my expectations were for the most part fulfilled, though I also struck some wet days and some inhospitable towns. Many of the village chiefs were exceedingly friendly, and evidently considered it a great honour to be able to entertain a white visitor; and the heartiness of their manner had sometimes to make up for the scantiness of their accommodation. One morning early we reached a small village with a distant view across the valley of the Sankuru. We had only accomplished six miles, but my carriers assured me with great earnestness that the next town was very far, and that 'we no catch him' that day. In such circumstances the unfortunate traveller is at the mercy of his men. On the previous day we had done sixteen miles of very heavy climbing, and I therefore decided that a half day's rest would prove beneficial and would enable us to recover a little strength. And so we remained over at Kamanda's.

The chief himself was a noisy, excitable, energetic man, who rushed about in every direction, shouting at his people to do this and that, to bring water and fowls and eggs for the

white man, to prepare porridge for the carriers of the white man, to clear a hut for the white man to lodge in, and so forth. And if any one appeared to be slack and dilatory, Kamanda would rush at him like a tilting knight, without, however, inflicting any material damage. When the white man had at length been suitably provided for, Kamanda was free to turn his attention to his own concerns. At one end of his village he was having a new hut put up, but the slow progress made was little to his liking. He therefore called his drummer and bade him strike up a quick march, and then, arming himself with a stout cudgel, he dashed wildly at the workmen with shouts and threats and imprecations. I did not know whether to be more amused at the excitement of the chief or at the imperturbability of the builders, who were evidently quite accustomed to the vagaries of their lord and master, and were as little concerned at his violence as ducks at the drip from the eaves. Kamanda observed my evident amusement, looked at me slyly for a moment or two, and then expanded into a broad grin, which was reflected in the universal hilarity of the onlookers.

### *The Basongi Cannibals*

The tribe that inhabits the open plains between the Sankuru and the Lomami rivers is called the Basongi, and is identical with the notorious Zappo-zaps, who were at one time the terror of the countryside. In spite of the evil repute they bear I found them an exceedingly interesting people. Like many Congo tribes they were at one time passionately devoted to cannibalism. Captives taken in war were invariably spared to be fattened for the table, and even the corpses of enemies slain on the battle-field were collected, hastily dried, carried home and thrust into the cooking-pot. Mr. Sheppard, to whom I have already referred as involved with Dr. Morrison in a case-at-law with the Compagnie du Kasai, tells that on one occasion he visited a stockade of the Zappo-zaps, where he counted eighty-one human hands slowly drying before the fire, while outside the fence he saw the remains of forty individuals who had been slaughtered to make a meal for their conquerors. Whenever the supply of captives ran short, these Basongi did not scruple to kill a person of their own tribe who had been found guilty of some offence or other, and to serve him up at one of their cannibal orgies. The Govern-

ment has naturally put a stop to practices so repellent to man's higher instincts, and cannibalism is a crime which is severely punished. But it can hardly be doubted that under cover of the darkness, and in the dense bush where detection is almost impossible, the most depraved members of the tribe still continue to gorge themselves on human flesh.

Cannibals or no cannibals, the Basongi of to-day seem to me to be a vigorous and intelligent people. They are fairly well clothed, particularly well clothed, indeed, when I compare them with the naked tribes of the Sudan and North Congoland. Their huts are of oblong shape, and are built on two sides of a long street, which is kept in a condition of great cleanliness. Towards the white man they comport themselves with a natural courtesy which makes an exceedingly favourable impression. When the visitor approaches a village, the men rise, raise their hand to their foreheads and call out *bozo* (a corruption, I take it, of *bon jour*). The chief then grasps and shakes your right hand and then your right thumb, faces about and precedes you to the hut prepared for your reception. The women howl a welcome by thrusting their tongue in and out of their lips with extreme rapidity, and producing a weird ululation. Children are consumed with curiosity, and trot behind you, before you, alongside of you, and anywhere where they can obtain an unimpeded view of this marvellous phenomenon—a white man.

The Basongi have their religious beliefs and practices, like all other natives. As you march down the sole street which the village boasts, you observe, at distances of about fifty yards, mounds of clay, bearing an exact resemblance to ant-hills. Instead of culminating in a conical point, however, they are flat-topped, and on this flat surface is a slight hollow, designed to receive a pot of beer, a basket of flour, or some such small offering for the ancestral spirits. Peering into one of their dark huts I distinguished a block of wood that had some likeness to a human head. I was about to drag it outside for a closer inspection when the owner of the house rushed up and besought me, by anxious and terrified signs, not to lay sacrilegious hands upon his household teraphim. 'Well,' I said, 'I am sure I mean no disrespect to your wooden divinity; I won't touch him; but just bring him along outside, that I can have a good look at him.' I had idol and master, together with the drum and the cutlass that belong to

the group, placed beneath a banana-tree, and then made a photo of the whole. The appearance of this image was certainly sufficiently uninviting, and represented an old man with a curly beard. The figure had been coated with white clay; a string of beads adorned the neck, and a bit of cloth covered the lower part of the bust. Two shapeless pieces of wood, tied to the body with leathern thongs, stood for the arms, while the whole was placed upon a small platform made of sticks lashed closely together.

### *From the Lubefu to the Lomami*

The rivers of this part of the country run in southerly and northerly direction. We found them mostly bridged, the administration having made an attempt to construct a wagon road across the country from the Sankuru to the Lualaba. Carts were procured and oxen trained to the yoke, but through a piece of carelessness the oxen were permitted to stray into the fly country near the Lualaba, and all perished. Since then the road has fallen into disuse and the bridges are beginning to crumble away. On the 24th July we covered a long distance. At the outset the rolling hills still stretched before us, and then for a matter of five miles we wandered through thin forest, descending gradually to the Lukula River, where we halted an hour for me to breakfast. Next we passed over open grass-clad moors and through a strip of jungle, arriving at the Lubefu River at 1.15 P.M. This river flows swiftly down a narrow gorge of clay, and seemed disappointingly small; but when we mounted the hillside and secured a better view from the east, I saw that it was a stream of considerable volume. There were abundant tracks here of hippo, buffalo, roan antelope and smaller game, but nothing came into sight. Up to the Lubefu we had already covered nineteen miles, and if there had been any signs of human habitation, I would have called a halt. But there was nothing: no village, no shelter, no food for the men. Moreover, the sweat-flies made life a burden, and though I flung myself down on the grass in the shade of a tall tree, seeking a few moments' respite from the toil of the march, these tiny pests allowed me no peace till I rose and literally took to my heels. East of the river there is a sharp ascent, at the summit of which we saw a few deserted huts, with a single native family

in occupation. Apparently this was at one time a post staffed by white men, as witness this tumble-down house, and the rows of pineapples all planted neatly at the wayside. We had been informed that Pwilele's town was just beyond the river, but 'just beyond' meant in this case a matter of five or six miles, and five or six miles, after you have already done nineteen, amount to just about three times their face value. The longest road, however, comes to an end. At 4.30 that afternoon I arrived, weary, footsore, and beaten, at Pwilele's village. Fortunately it was Saturday evening: the next day was the day of rest—never so highly appreciated as in the wilderness, when you are wearied with a week's continuous marching, and hail with unbounded joy and relief the thought of a long rest until Monday morning. Nowhere is that old bit of doggerel so true as in Central Africa—

> Of all the days that 's in the week
> I dearly love but one day,
> And that 's the day that comes between
> A Saturday and Monday.

The next day (Sunday) was my birthday, and therefore not only a day of rest, but a day of reflection and of introspection. In my diary I wrote somewhat as follows: 'I am in the heart of Africa, cast in a strange environment, contemplating strange scenes, and thrown into contact with men of a strange speech, with whom I can hold no converse. The nearest missionaries are ninety miles away. Day after day I plunge into an unknown future, walking by faith, like Abraham, who "set out, not knowing whither he went." The future is all unknown, yet not all uncertain. The past I feel to be a guarantee for the future. He by whose hand I have been led thus far will be my guide even until death.'

I note furthermore: 'This is a village of Ba-tembu, a clan of the Ba-songi. The natives are decently dressed. The houses, of which I am occupying one, are of good construction. During the day mat-weaving is in progress, since both men and women wear about the loins a piece of soft matting. Old Pwilele, the chief, is a friendly soul, supplying me with fowls, eggs, nuts, and fruit out of his scanty store. My men are still very footsore, and come to me with chafed shoulders, asking for ointment. . . . Fine evening, moon being nearly full. The porters, who hail from Mr. Sieg's congregation at Lusambo, have a brief service of song this evening, after which one of

them engages in prayer. This is probably the very first time that the songs of Zion are heard, and the name of Christ named, in this Ba-tembu village. Will it be the last also ? '

Journeying on from Pwilele's we marched through several large villages, the population becoming heavier as we approached the Lomami River. The route became hillier, deep ravines cutting across our path at right angles, and necessitating more strenuous exertions. The native chiefs remained friendly as ever. Pianyi Chonga, the headman of one of the most populous towns in the whole of the Lomami district, sent two of his sub-chiefs for a distance of two miles to meet me. His village is nearly half a mile in length, and after traversing the whole of it, I found at the further end the largest rest-house, erected by a native chief, which I have anywhere seen. It boasts four huge apartments and a broad ten-foot verandah running round the whole building, while a noble flagstaff, flying the Belgian flag, stands before the door. Just across the way was the compound of the chief, a small village in itself, in which were housed the members of his numerous harem.

For two days more the forward march continued across a country with sandy surface soil. The landscape was picturesque—grassy hills with a sprinkling of shrubs, alternating with ravines and valleys encircling a forest of closely packed trees. Here and there a clump of palms stands like an island in a green ocean, but generally speaking the uplands are clad with acacias and *mopani*. The overland trail from Luebo and Lusambo has been one of the pleasantest portions of my African travels. The land-march, however tiring on individual days, is infinitely preferable to the river voyage. The daily exercise keeps you in good fettle and sets a keener edge to your appetite. Your movements are all your own, and you may march when you will and rest when you like. You obtain a better idea of the land through the midst of which you pass, and are thrown into more direct contact with the natives whom you desire to study in their actions and habits of life. And then there is always the chance of sighting game and getting an antelope for the pot. Provided always that your health is robust, the road good, and the weather not unduly tempestuous, I have no hesitation in saying that you will much prefer land to water in journeying across the mountains and the plains of Africa.

On the eleventh day after our departure from Lusambo we filed into Tshofa (or Chofa). This *poste* was a place of some importance in former years, when communication between the Sankuru and the Lualaba was more important commercially than it has become since the completion of the sections of rail along the course of the latter river. Tshofa has also some historical renown. Talking with M. Wauters, the courteous *chef de poste*, I drew from him the following notes which I have somewhat expanded with details set down in certain printed books. It is, in the main, the

### *Story of Gongo Lutete*

This remarkable man was originally a slave of Zefu, the son of Tippoo-tib, the famous Arab chief and slave-dealer. He is described as a well-built, intelligent man of about five feet nine inches in height, with large eyes, a small mouth and a long, narrow nose. His manners were very dignified and he never allowed any one to forget that he was a chief. Because of his ability and bravery, Gongo Lutete was appointed by the Arabs to be chief of the Batetela people, who occupy the left bank of the Lomami a little to the north of Tshofa. Gongo was wise in peace and brave and skilful in war. He secured the submission to the Arab rule of Lupungu and Pania, two of the most powerful chiefs of these regions, and under his able administration Arab rule seemed firmly established from the Lualaba as far west as the banks of the Sankuru.

But the Belgians were not sleeping. Travellers in the districts lying to the east had brought them word that the Arabs were pushing forward westward, and had even crossed the Lomami, which by previous agreement had been made the western limit of the Arab sphere of influence. Wissmann, Delcommune and De Marinel all agreed in establishing the fact that the Arabs were moving through the lands of the east with fire and sword, and were gradually extending the area of their slave raids. Baron Dhanis, at that time the Belgian administrator at Luluabourg, undertook a campaign against the raiders, who themselves were not slow to offer battle. Gongo Lutete was the first to face the Belgian forces, but he was so badly beaten that he conceived a sudden respect for the Europeans, tendered his submission and joined his

forces to those of his erstwhile enemies. The Arabs in the meantime had assembled a vast army, with which in 1892 they crossed the Lomami, determined to engage with the forces of Dhanis. They were allowed to complete the passage of the river, and then were attacked with immense fury by Dhanis and his levies. The battle soon became a rout, and the rout a massacre. Thousands met their death on the banks of the Lomami, whose waters ran with blood. The remnant that escaped was closely pursued by Dhanis and Michaux as far as Nyangwe, the Arab stronghold on the Lualaba. This was captured and burnt. The same fate overtook Kasongo, and the power of the Arabs was finally broken.

This war was marked by the most terrible atrocities. The West Coast men with Dhanis fought probably with some regard for the principles of decency and humanity, but with the horde of irregulars under command of Gongo Lutete it was different. They were Batetela, Basongi, Manyema—cannibals all. Almost every contest degenerated into an indiscriminate massacre. Whatever death the opposing warriors met with, the end was the same, and they were invariably eaten. Prisoners captured were issued as rations to the rank and file of the army. Men and women were handed over to these demons, and were simply cut to pieces as they stood, and devoured as soon as their flesh could be cooked. Every scrap of flesh was consumed, and only bones were left on the morning after the cannibalistic orgy. The rivers swarmed with crocodiles, and hardly a man who sought escape by committing himself to the water, avoided falling into the jaws of these ravenous beasts.

What became of Gongo Lutete? His was a sad end. English writers hold that he was shamefully treated by the Belgians, and unjustly sentenced to death. Belgian authorities maintain that he abused the power with which the administration endowed him, and commenced maltreating and mutilating his subjects. In any case he was condemned to death, and sentenced to be shot. The unfortunate Gongo attempted to hang himself with a rope twisted from his own clothing, but he was cut down betimes, brought round, and then shot in the manner prescribed by the sentence of the court-martial.

The Batetela never forgave the Belgian Government for

this act of treachery (as some call it) or of justice (as the Belgian apologists style it). They bided their time, and after a mutiny at Luluabourg in 1895, in which the Belgian officer in command was slain, they rose in serious revolt in 1897. Travelling eastwards the mutineers wandered through the Manyema country beyond the Lualaba, pursued by the indomitable Dhanis. Occasionally they secured passing successes, and several white officers—Leroi, Bell, and Van der Schinck among the number—were killed. But Dhanis followed on their track with the utmost persistency, and ultimately drove their scattered remnants across the eastern border, where they found a harbour of refuge in Uganda and German East Africa.

### *Re-stocking the Larder*

Between the Lomami and the Lualaba rivers I had opportunity to make use of my rifle, which for some five months had been rusting in its case. Tracks of game animals are plentiful in this vicinity, but we follow a regular road, and during the day the game is alert enough to keep far from the haunts of men. If you wish to find anything at all, you must travel far afield. At a place called Mutombo-mkula I remained over a day to stock our larder. I had been told that buffalo frequented the bush, and so I determined to go in search of them. The reader who has any sporting instincts will sympathise with me when I tell him that of all travellers who have coursed through Africa I am probably the most unfortunate in the matter of lighting on big game. I should like to know how many hundreds of miles I have tramped through the forest, clambered over stony ridges, and waded through noxious marshes in my endeavour to find a breakfast for myself and my men. However, I don't complain, many another who sought as diligently is not alive to tell the tale. I am: and therefore I am satisfied.

Under guidance of two adults and a boy I set out one fine morning, bent on the usual quest. Of buffalo there was not a sign, except for abundant spoor. Then we sighted a small herd of hartebeest, and I followed hotfoot on their track. I obtained one or two shots at three hundred yards, but did not accurately gauge the distance and fired too high. After a time I drew near once more under cover of an ant-hill, judged of the distance as carefully as I could, and fired. Apparently

a hit, but there go my antelopes careering over the plain. Stop a bit, though; that one is slackening, he falls behind, he rolls over in a cloud of dust, kicking and struggling. In a couple of minutes he is dead. I restrain my eager men from rushing up and plunging their lances into the dead body, as they are prone to do, explaining under my breath that I want to get within range of the rest of the herd and shoot a second animal. But the hartebeest were too wary. Directly they saw me crawl out from behind the ant-heap, they made off, and in a few moments nothing but a cloud of dust on the horizon indicated the direction in which they had disappeared.

Leaving two of my three guides to cut up, I hastened back to camp, and sent a relay of my carriers to bring in the meat. They arrived at 1 P.M., for the spot at which I had secured my head of game lay something like three miles from the village. In the afternoon we sallied out again in another direction, and soon found ourselves in a scene of great beauty. A broad valley unfolded itself before our eyes, carpeted with the softest grass. Here and there tall, slender palms rose to the sky, dwarfing by their length all the other trees of the plain. Immense ant-mounds were visible all over the level surface, completely decked with thick grass and crowned with a clump of shady trees. Creeping up the side of one of these we ensconced ourselves in a fork of a convenient tree, and cast piercing glances across the valley, which looked like nothing so much as an English park with level lawn and sporadic groups of foliage. But though four pairs of eyes swept the landscape for full fifteen minutes, not a movement, not a vestige of animal life could we discern. We moved forward, leaving behind us the enchanted valley, wherein there was neither sight nor sound, and ascended another ant-heap on the margin of a wide plain, the grass of which had been partially burnt. From this point of vantage we again scrutinised the landscape with the utmost closeness. The sharp eyes of the boy were the first to descry a sign of life. At a distance of three or four hundred yards, concealed behind the high grass, lay a small antelope enjoying its noon rest. It had moved only the tip of its ear to drive away a fly, but that was enough for my keen-sighted little guide, who instantly spotted the animal and pointed it out to me.

I attempted a cautious approach, but the reedbuck—they proved to be a herd of four of this family—were soon aware of

the presence of enemies, and made a dash for the open, where they halted in order to take stock of their pursuers. I crept as close as I dared, and then fired; but the distance was too great, or the huntsman too unskilful, and nothing resulted. 'Never mind,' I said to myself, 'this sort of game is not worth the candle, and you are on the track of big game to-day.' A long march through a mile of barren brushwood brought us to a green meadow. This seemed a likely place, so I signed to my men to go slow and to keep a sharp eye upon every patch of grass and trees. Almost immediately one of the guides dropped upon his knees. That is a sure sign of the presence of game, and ushers in a few moments of great excitement. The question which obsesses the hunter is whether he will be able to creep to within firing distance before the still unconscious animal is aware of his proximity. Three conditions are necessary before he can hope for a near approach: first, the wind must be favourable; for if he lies to windward of his quarry, the chances of getting close up are exceedingly narrow. Secondly, there must be suitable cover to permit of an approach to within two hundred yards. By suitable cover I mean enough, but not too much. The space between you and your game may be without cover, so that directly you emerge from the protection of the bush which has sheltered you, the antelope makes off. Or, there may be too much cover between hunter and hunted, in which case you cannot obtain an unobstructed view, and even if you hit, generally inflict a wound which is not mortal. The third condition is that there shall be only one antelope, or at the most two. It is exceedingly difficult to stalk a herd of game. One of the number is generally on the *qui vive*. Or else, while you are crawling along, like the wily serpent, on the anterior part of your anatomy, and keeping diligently out of sight of one of the herd, another will catch sight of you, gaze fixedly in your direction, and at once infect the whole troop with his alarm. If any one of these three conditions is adverse, and *a fortiori* if all three are unfavourable, your chances of securing flesh for supper diminish in like ratio.

To return from the digression—behold me worming my way through the grass towards the spot from which I hope to obtain a clear view of the antelope that has been sighted. I reach the sheltering bush, remove my wideawake, and peer cautiously over. There he stands, peacefully grazing, still

totally oblivious of danger. Now in cold blood one resents Mr. Punch's picture of the typical Englishman, who rubs his hands and says, 'What a heavenly morning: let's go and kill something'; but it expresses the sentiment not of the Englishman alone, nor of the South African alone, but of mankind. The centuries which lie between us and savagery are but a moment in the swift march of time, and spite of all the veneer of civilisation the instincts of the woodsman and the hunter survive. I therefore raise my rifle, glance along the barrel for a fraction of a second, and fire. It was a hit, but not a mortal hit, and the antelope springs away to take up a position a hundred yards further off. Meanwhile I am ready for a second shot, but just as I am about to pull the trigger, there is a violent commotion among the bushes, and the whole wood seems alive with game. I remain silent and invisible. Three reedbuck break through the brushwood, and draw up, listening anxiously, not thirty yards from where I crouch. I was on the point of aiming at one of them when a huge roan came galloping into view, and paused a moment at about one hundred yards distance. He was only partially visible, but I drew a careful bead on him and fired. Away he rushed, only to halt again two hundred yards off. This time I had an unimpeded view: I fired, and had the satisfaction of seeing him roll in the dust. The three reedbuck had meanwhile made off, but the animal wounded by me at first was found lying under a bush, and was soon secured. My followers were overjoyed. Here was abundance, not merely for my immediate *entourage*, but for the whole village. In the meantime the sun was on the western incline, and the town was four miles distant. At six o'clock we reached camp, but it was midnight before the meat had all been fetched home.

### *Nearing the Lualaba*

It is hardly necessary to particularise the events of the march from Tshofa to the Lualaba. We were eleven days on the way. As we neared our destination the village chiefs seemed to be more alive to their responsibilities towards wayfarers like myself, and rest-houses were more frequent. At Kifuenkese's, to take an instance, I received a royal welcome, the men greeting me with salvos of *bozos* and the women howling in their usual gleeful fashion. The village was a

DUG-OUTS ON THE LUALABA

THE LUALABA AT LAKE KISALÉ

populous one and sheltered by fine trees, though the architecture of the huts fell somewhat below the average. The chief, an old greybeard clad in a nondescript robe that once was white, paraded about the village with a large retinue, and all in order to find five eggs and two fowls for the white stranger. I was therefore enabled to have a late breakfast on scrambled eggs, cold bushbuck joint, bread, strawberry jam, cocoa and bananas. This is an average breakfast menu. When on trek I reduced my meals to two, namely, breakfast at eleven o'clock, or as near that hour as circumstances permitted, and dinner at six in the evening. On starting in the early morning I generally had two cups of warm coffee, with one or two dry biscuits; and in the afternoon at two I took a cup of tea, with wheatmeal biscuits and cheese.

Halfway between Tshofa and the Lualaba the country was less picturesque, and, I suppose, less fertile. At any rate, villages were fewer, waterless tracts were much more numerous, and so were low-lying plains, which in the rainy season become impassable marshes. Even during the dry months there still remain some puddles, and my men persuaded me to adopt another route than that recommended by the *chef de poste* at Tshofa, in order to avoid swamps which they described as being wholly impracticable. The route which we followed had its full share of difficult swampy soil, and my personal boy Kalala was frequently impressed into the work which his predecessor Suli did so well—that of carrying his master through bogs and morasses. These marshes are not only a hindrance to progress, but a menace to health. They are a fertile breeding-ground for mosquitoes, greatest of all the evils of Africa, and for big, ugly, treacherous marsh-flies, that settle upon your hand or your leg so lightly that you feel nothing, and then draw blood with every bite.

When within three days' march of Kongolo, the chief *poste* on this section of the Lualaba, we saw before us a few isolated hills, the first we came across in many days. Presently we were right among the mountains, and kept coasting along a fine, well-wooded valley lying to the right of our road. Next day there were more mountains, rising in some cases to a height of a thousand or twelve hundred feet, round which we worked our way. The composition of these hills differs little from that of the ironstone kopjes with which we are familiar in South Africa. A note on the geology of this region may not

be amiss. The whole of Central Congoland, as I have stated before, was once submerged, and formed the bed of a huge lake, to which has been assigned the name of the Kundelungu Sea. Volcanic activity seems to have ceased prior to the deposition of this Kundelungu bed, which is assigned, approximately, to the Permian period. Making a geologic section across Central Congoland from west to east, we have first the long flat plain that extends from the Sankuru to the Lualaba, consisting in the main of clayey soil with a sandy surface. Beyond the Lualaba, eastwards, the contour rises into mountains of sandstone (Kasongo sandstone), followed by a more level stretch of country in which diorite predominates. Finally we have the lofty mountains west of the Tanganyika and Albertine rift valleys, which have a granitic character.

We first looked upon the Lualaba River on the 12th of August. It was an auspicious and noteworthy day. The night having been overcast, there was no dew upon the grass, and I walked along gaily with dry knees and dry feet. The forest was fairly dense, and though the early rains had hardly commenced to fall, the grass had already attained to a respectable height. The plain was covered with lofty palm trees and immense ant-hills, that looked in the distance exactly like red-walled, grass-covered huts, and frequently deceived me into believing that I was nearing a village. Soon we rounded a rocky kopje, and plunged into the tropical landscape that characterises the valley of the Lualaba. A broad plain stretched before us, so densely covered with trees and bush that we could discover no sign of green herbage. Far away in the haze lay a range of faint blue mountains, which indicated the eastern limit of the Lualaba valley. Between the spot where we stood and that eastern barrier the eye rested upon nothing but a sea of dark green foliage, completely covering the great level plain, and cutting off every view of the Lualaba itself. When we were within twenty yards of the river's bank I had as yet no suspicion that the stream was anywhere near; then suddenly there was a gap in the fence of trees, and I saw the broad, shining surface of the waters.

### *Arrival at Kongolo*

We had a long march northward along the bank before we came in sight of Kongolo. The magnificent groves of palms, which had rejoiced our eyes since early morning, now extended

in an almost unbroken forest to Kongolo. We passed numerous villages, the houses being built on both sides of an open space, through which ran our road, lined by an avenue of papayi trees. The nearer we drew to Kongolo, the broader did our way become, the more numerous were the villages and the greater the signs of life and activity. The natives are almost without exception well clothed, and live in peace, plenty, and prosperity. We march on unresting, but Kongolo seems to recede. At last a huge barrack-like building comes into view, and courage revives. Then we catch sight of the immense steel poles of the Marconigraph station, projecting high above the tallest palms, and in a few minutes we are in Kongolo, and inquiring for the house of the *chef de poste*.

In appearance and situation Kongolo is mediocre. It has considerable commercial importance as being the terminus of the Kindu-Kongolo railway, that has been built to avoid the Nyangwe cataracts. From here southward an uninterrupted stretch of navigable water extends as far as Bukama, which in a few years' time will be in railroad connection with Cape Town, as part of the Cape-to-Cairo scheme. What imparts its chief charm to the lie of this *poste* is, of course, the river, here a smooth, gleaming stream of perhaps half a mile in breadth. The tall raphia palms nodding their high tops to the breeze, are an additional attraction, but unhappily they are being rapidly thinned out. In other respects the township possesses no beauty. The houses are mostly of the primitive wattle-and-daub type, though two or three buildings of greater permanence were under construction when I passed through. The railway station is a structure of iron, and the many shops and offices are all flimsy fabrics which a typhoon would reduce to irremediable ruin. The township has been laid out on a huge scale, for which I was quite unable to discover any reason. One of the officials ventured the opinion that it was so designed 'for hygienic reasons,' but I fail to see what rules of hygiene require that twenty Europeans should be scattered over an area that is three-quarters of a mile long and nearly half a mile broad. Probably the idea was that they should be kept trotting about in the hot sun, and if this was the real object it is certainly achieved to admiration.

On arrival at Kongolo I inquired, as I have said, for that useful and indispensable functionary the *chef de poste*. In large centres like Kongolo, however, there is as a rule no

*chef de poste*, his duties being fulfilled by various other officials. In my search after this elusive personage I was sent from pillar to post, and finally I was ushered into the presence of the *administrateur territoriale*, a man apparently of high authority but of friendly address. He apologised for the fact that houses for travellers were so scarce, but promised to have one assigned to me. 'It is not precisely a palace,' he said, 'but I think that it will keep the rain off your head.' Under guidance of the administrator's secretary I found my way to my new quarters. They certainly were not palatial; I peered in at the doorway, and asked myself where I was to place table, bed or chair. The white ants had appropriated the whole of the floor space, which was dotted with mounds and ant-heaps. The walls had been thoroughly undermined. I glanced up aloft, but the roof gave me no comfort. It was leaning over to one side at an angle of forty-five degrees. I turned to the secretary politely, and said that I thought the apartment would do, but my heart (and I am afraid also my looks) belied my words. Indeed I was somewhat fearful of venturing beneath a roof that diverged so alarmingly from the perpendicular. Kalala, my boy, observing my hesitation, said encouragingly, 'He no fall,' and as I acknowledged that he was far better acquainted with the idiosyncrasies of African huts and African roofs than I was, I made a virtue of my necessity, and began to make my room habitable. I secured a spade, and a couple of branches to do duty as brooms, and set my men to work. At the lapse of an hour we had carted away the most of the intrusive ant-heaps and levelled the floor. This tumbledown place served as my home for twelve days, and as Kalala had rightly prophesied concerning the roof, it fell not—by miracle, rather than by good construction. The administrator's prediction that the roof would keep out the rain, on the contrary, was falsified, for when the showers descended I was busily employed inside in dodging the leakages.

Before closing this chapter I wish to call attention to the opening for missionary effort which this part of the Congo presents. The American Presbyterians are at work among the Ba-luba and Ba-lulua tribes in the basin of the Sankuru; and to the north-east of their sphere of labour the American Episcopal Methodists have opened a station at Wembo Nyama, among the Ba-tetela, who formerly caused the Congo Government such trouble. Three hundred miles away, on the banks of

the Lualaba, there is a Roman Catholic mission ; but between these lie the tribes through whose territory I had just marched, and who are wholly unevangelised. The Belgian Protestants have indeed decided to commence mission work near Tshofa, and Dr. Anet, one of the leaders of the movement, visited the Congo in 1911 and chose a prospective site at Muyeye on the Lomami ; but the outbreak of war and the destruction of Belgium has put all thought of an immediate commencement out of the question. It is to be hoped, however, that after the declaration of peace the 'Société Belge de Missions Protestantes au Congo' [1] will speedily get to work, whether in this region or elsewhere. The moral assistance which such a society will be able to render to other Protestant missions is incalculable ; and conversely, the encouragement which the Belgian Protestants, who form but a fraction of the population of Belgium, will derive from the proximity of like-minded missions is correspondingly great. In the meantime I cannot but call attention to the promise of this field of labour among the intelligent Ba-songi, and express the hope that they may soon be brought under the influence of the Gospel of Christ.

[1] The secretary of the above mission, as I note from Dr. Anet's book *En Eclaireur*, is Mons. P. M. Olivier, 51 rue Crespel, Bruxelles. Dr. Anet himself, I do not doubt, can be found by addressing a letter to the care of the Baptist Missionary Society, 19 Furnivall Street, London, E.C.

# CHAPTER XXIII

## DOWN SOUTH TO KATANGA

We detachments steady throwing,
Down the hedges, through the passes, up the mountains steep,
Conquering, holding, daring, venturing as we go the unknown ways,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

We primeval forests felling,
We the rivers stemming, vexing we and piercing deep the mines within,
We the surface broad surveying, we the virgin soil upheaving,
Pioneers ! O pioneers !

WALT WHITMAN.

### *Life at Kongolo*

Two or three circumstances combined to render my stay at Kongolo less monotonous than it would otherwise have been. One was the kindness shown me by M. Aerts, the *commissaire de police*. His house chanced to be situated near mine, and with the courtesy which I found so charming in Belgian officials (three exceptions only recurring to my mind), he came over and invited me to dine and spend the evening with him. Aerts was a genial host. He was a performer in a small way on the concertina, and nothing would suit but he must enliven the intervals between one course and another with a tune from his instrument. When he reached the end of his not very extensive repertoire, he would arrange three or four tumblers before him and beat a tattoo on table and glasses, humming a brisk tune by way of *motif*. He was exceedingly kind in offers of assistance, and impressed upon me the fact that *he* was the man to apply to in all emergencies. The *administrateur*, the *commissaire du district*, the *secrétaire*—they were very well in their way ; but if there was anything practical to be done I must just call in Aerts. I was reminded of the inimitable Codlin ; 'Recollect the friend. Codlin's the friend, not Short. Short's very well as far as he goes, but the real friend is Codlin—not Short.'

I must acquit my friend Aerts of any interested motives.

He had no private ends to serve. It was mere boyish egotism and enthusiasm that led him to speak with such jaunty self-importance. As a matter of fact he rendered me real services, and provided me with a number of men to convey my goods and chattels to the landing-stage at the other end of the township, while from time to time his kindheartedness prompted him to send me a joint of venison, a dishful of vegetables or a basket of fruit. I found in him too, a purchaser for my gramophone, which he was delighted to get, and I was quite ready to dispose of, having had eighteen months' use out of it.

Another circumstance which contributed to while away the tedium of my detention was a collection of English books which I discovered at a local trader's. The question of literature is a formidable one for the African traveller. We are not all Roosevelts, with the means of providing a 'Pigskin Library' of sixty or seventy volumes. Had I been able to carry such a set with me, I would have suffered no mental hunger. But a dozen volumes were all I could compass. Two volumes of Shakespeare in the Oxford Miniature Edition, a volume of Selections from Browning, Irving's *Conquest of Granada*, the *Essays of Elia*, Froude's *Oceana*, and in addition *Esmond*, *Villette*, and *Pickwick*, formed my mental pabulum for many months. I know that wise littérateurs will shake their heads and say that I ought to have done much better. But there you have the range of my taste, reduced to its lowest terms. I confess that I wish I could have taken a volume or two more of history; for a long historical work is just what you want on such solitary journeys. But histories are voluminous and heavy, and I could not venture to add to my loads.

This being the case, I had to eke out my scanty store by devouring whatever fare offered at the mission stations which I visited, and by attempts to beg, borrow, or steal volumes to carry with me. One of the traders at Kongolo chanced to be in possession of a discarded library, which he had probably picked up somewhere for a mere song. Here was treasure trove indeed. I borrowed two books every day, and when on the point of taking my departure for the south, effected an exchange of some fiction which I had previously picked up for certain other books which I was glad to get. Thus have those who are unprovided with 'Pigskin Libraries' to live from hand to mouth in the African wilds.

On one or two occasions during my stay I took my rifle and strolled through the woods, without any very lively hope of securing an antelope. We did indeed see one, but he was lost in the dense undergrowth almost as soon as we caught our glimpse of him ; for what with a heavy population in this vicinity, and a number of white men who are all quite as ready as I am for a taste of venison, the game is remarkably shy. The great woods were silent, but for the occasional screams of parrots feasting on the fruits of the palm trees, and the gentle cooing of numberless pigeons. Sauntering along between these lofty trees I was sometimes startled by the sudden flight of a mottled brown bird from almost between my feet. It was the nightjar, with a quaint long feather at the tip of each wing, like streamers at the masthead of a ship. Right in front of us, on the level ground, without nest or hollow or protection of any kind, lie its two spotted eggs, somewhat larger in size than those of a pigeon. Ants are feverishly busy, as usual, at their task of collecting food for their hidden store. Lizards lie basking in the sun, and dart swiftly out of reach as you approach. I also noticed a curious little mouse with a long, flexible snout like a rudimentary elephant's trunk. His home is in the midst of a heap of old sticks, and he progresses by making little jumps of two feet and more in length. This is, I suppose, the elephant mouse. Thus wandering through the pathless forest, there are a thousand little sights to attract your attention and kindle your interest. Even though your knowledge of natural history and botany is as meagre as mine, the sights and sounds of the woods have a charm and a mystery all their own. You find yourself wondering for whom the birds sing so cheerily, for whom the ants toil, for whom the squirrels and the mice gambol, and for whom the fronded palms rear their high tops to the sky. Not for themselves alone surely, but for the total harmony which we call nature, and for Him whom we adore as nature's God.

Sic vos non vobis ædificatis, aves ;
Sic vos non vobis mellificatis, apes.

### *On the Lualaba*

At length, on the 23rd August 1915, I went on board the river boat *Constantin de Burlit*, accompanied by my henchman Kalala and sixteen packages. Our captain was a young

seaman who had served his apprenticeship in the British merchant service, and had an easy and colloquial command of the English tongue. With Captain Blaes, as he was called, I was soon on the best of terms, and at the end of three weeks we parted with mutual expressions of goodwill. Our steamer had a barge, one-third longer than itself, lashed to the starboard side, also two fair-sized whale-boats, one on each side, while two canoes trailed behind. We were not a boat, but a flotilla. Besides captain and engineer, we were a company of six passengers, and had in addition some thirty blacks on board. For the six passengers only two cabins were available, one being on the steamer and one on the barge. As is always the case in the Congo, *Bula Matadi* (*i.e.* state functionaries) take precedence, and the rest of us had to do the best we could by putting up our beds at night in some corner of the deck. Selecting for myself a portion of the bridge-deck of the barge, I fixed up a piece of canvas in such manner that it should protect me from the slanting rays of the afternoon sun, and secure at the same time a measure of privacy when I came to retire for the night.

I approached Captain Blaes with questions as to the probable length of our voyage to Bukama.

'Bukama,' he said; 'why, you can't expect to get to Bukama on this boat.'

'Well,' I replied, 'the Government had given me a ticket to Bukama by the *Constantin de Burlit*.'

'That may be,' he retorted, 'but I say that this boat is not going to Bukama. It can't get there.'

'Why, what 's the matter ? ' I asked.

'Sandbanks,' was the answer.

We started auspiciously enough. Our barge was laden with about forty huge logs, each eighteen inches thick and thirty feet long, destined for Lake Kisale, where the administration are endeavouring to demark a passage through the encroaching papyrus. At 2 P.M. on the afternoon of the first day we halted for a time at a wooding station, and on resuming the voyage ran immediately on to a sand-bar. Our captain was a cautious mariner and we were soon off, and trying at various other points to find a path across the obstruction. An exploring canoe was sent out, and the discovery was made that the only practicable passage was close along the bank. But the depth of water was plainly insufficient for our heavily

laden barge. So back we went to the wooding station, the captain saying that he intended throwing the half of his logs overboard. By the time one log had been hauled up from the hold, and rolled into the water with huge sound and splash, night had arrived. The next morning was consumed with the work of discharging what had just been taken on board at Kongolo. After eighteen of these monsters had been discharged we were able to proceed, having wasted twenty-three and a half hours at this spot. The rest of the day passed without incident, but on the following morning at nine we encountered a sandbank which held us in its embrace for eight hours. On the fourth day at noon we reached Kabalo, the time for steamers under normal conditions being eight hours from Kongolo.

Kabalo is the river terminus for the Tanganyika railway. The *poste* is regularly laid out, the streets being bordered with huge tufts of lemon-grass. The virgin forest has been cut down for some distance around the township, and as no ornamental trees have been planted in its stead, the place has a bare and torrid look. The environing country is utterly flat and uninteresting, with only in the far south a few hills visible. The train to Albertville, on Lake Tanganyika, runs on Mondays and Wednesdays, taking two days to the trip. The passenger coaches have a smart appearance, but the accommodation is on a par with that of the other Congo railways, always excepting the Katanga rolling stock, which is practically that of the Rhodesian railway. Kabalo is also supplied with a Marconi apparatus.

At Kabalo the majority of our 'Bula Matadi' passengers disembarked, and the captain kindly offered me one of the vacant cabins; so that from this stage onwards I had a modicum of comfort and privacy. Our journey was devoid of startling incident. Frequent sandbanks, a strong wind blowing athwart our course and driving us on to the west bank, and a breakdown in the machinery, were some of the minor *contretemps* with which we had to contend. At a place called Ankoro we set ashore a trader and his goods, and great was the captain's chagrin to discover that six bottles of whisky and eighty-four pieces of cloth had been purloined during the voyage from Kongolo. An immediate search was instituted among the belongings of the boat-hands, and some pieces of the missing cloth were discovered in the pack of one of the men.

He was summarily dealt with, and received twenty-five strokes from the *chikote* (thong of hippo hide). Three more harbourers of stolen goods were subsequently apprehended and placed in chains. The captain was naturally indignant at the loss of the cloth, which, he confided to me, he would have to pay out of his own pocket; but he chiefly was vociferous at the disappearance of the whisky—'good liquor, you know, intended for us white men, that has now run down the throats of these niggers!'—and he turned from me with a look of supreme disgust on his face. The crew stood staunchly by one another, and would not peach on the thief; but Captain Blaes had his revenge. When pay-day came round he addressed the men, telling them that he could not afford to pay for the lost goods out of his own pocket, and as they had conspired to shield the real culprits, he would dock the earnings of each one proportionately, and so recover the value of the stolen wares.

On the 29th August we passed the confluence of the Luvua and the Lualaba. The Luvua is the river which carries the waters that come from lakes Moero and Bangweolo, and which is by some considered to be the real Congo, since it is the longest of the tributary streams which go to form the Lualaba. From this juncture and southward the banks of the Lualaba proper are low, the surrounding country maintains its dead level of flatness, and the river channel, which here is from one hundred to one hundred and fifty yards wide, goes on steadily narrowing. The banks are pretty well stocked with game, chiefly of the *cob* variety. At Mulongo, somewhat to the south of the Luvua confluence, lies a mission station of the Garenganze Mission. The local missionary, Mr. Zentler, had been sent away previously to my arrival, because a Roman Catholic priest thus advised the Government, Zentler being of German descent. But one of Zentler's friends, a trader on the river, discovered that the priest who had secured Zentler's dismissal bore a German name himself. So information was laid against him, with the result that he too was deported. Such is the story. *Se non è vero, è ben trovato.*

### *The Passage of Lake Kisale*

By the 3rd September we had got as far as Kadia, at the entrance to Lake Kisale. The whole of this area is a series of lakes or marshes, and is apparently the last puddle of the

Kundelungu Sea which in a former period of time covered all Central Congoland. Lake Kisale itself is rapidly drying up. Even now it has been so completely overgrown with tall papyrus that the traveller only occasionally catches a glimpse of stretches of open water. Hence the necessity under which the administration lies of palisading the channel along which the river steamers pass. At Kadia we lay for forty-eight hours, discharging the balance of our cargo of logs. I took advantage of the detention to secure a *lechwe* cob, which proved to be a welcome addition to our larder. The mosquitoes at Kadia were nearly as bad as I found them on the shores of Lake Edward. Fortunately they left us in comparative peace during the day, but directly the sun passed the western horizon their cohorts arrived for the punctual nocturnal attack. There was no means of warding off this envenomed assault but by beating an immediate retreat to the shelter of the mosquito curtain. On the first evening of my stay at Kadia I was still unacquainted with the enemy's method of attack, and I suffered badly in consequence. On the second evening I instructed the boy to have my dinner ready at five, so that by the time the mosquitoes commenced their air raids I was safely under cover.

The wildfowl on and around Lake Kisale are simply uncountable. The waters swarm with fish to an extent which I have seen nowhere else in Africa. Blaes told me that on one occasion they had to clear a small arm of the lake for the purpose of making a base for their palisading operations. When the water had been drained the fish lay upon the wet bottom in great heaps. They invited the natives from far and near to fetch and carry away all they could; then the birds were given a chance; and after men and fowls had done all they could, there still remained a mass of rotting fish, which could not be got rid of. I lost count, not merely of the flocks of birds that flew past, but even of the varieties represented. Here are some: fish-eagles, herons, egrets, pelicans, two kinds of geese, two kinds of ducks, two kinds of ibis, kingfishers, plovers, and numerous smaller birds which I am not ornithologist enough to identify. The crocodiles, too, are more numerous and more audacious than I have seen them elsewhere. I saw as many as five or six at one time swimming round the steamer, showing only the tips of their ugly snouts above water.

Journeying through this lake was certainly a most interesting experience. At first we had the broad lake, showing some stretches of fairly clear water. It resembled at this stage a broad marshy flat, with squadrons of white waterfowl gorging themselves on fish in the shallows. Then came a formidable barrier in the channel through which we were feeling our way. For six hours our captain and the palisading engineer struggled to get our steamer through the mudbank. Happily their endeavours were crowned with success, for, as the captain pointed out to me, it was a serious matter to get stranded in Kisale. There was no wooding station, and no means of obtaining fuel once the supply gave out. Had we been stuck here, it would have been a case of taking to the boats and deserting the ship. Once past this hindrance we found ourselves in a somewhat strait channel through which the stream of the Lualaba flowed with a perceptible current. There were no visible banks, but the soil must have been close beneath the surface of the water, for in between the papyrus I noticed groups of acacias and a few other trees, which are the roosting-place of myriads of diving-birds. The channel then grows rapidly narrower, and the papyrus attains a great height. From the bridge-deck of the barge I could see nothing but two green walls; but when I ascended to the captain's hurricane-deck, which is at least thirty feet above the level of the stream, I had a view over an expanse of papyrus that stretched uninterruptedly to a range of blue hills on the one side, and on the other almost as far as eye could reach.

Presently something in the shape of banks of earth began to show. The channel was now not more than forty yards wide, and made frequent sharp turns, requiring the most careful navigation. Collisions with the banks were not infrequent, but they did small damage to our craft; and the captain said that they were insignificant compared with the bumps which the steamer had to endure when coming down-stream. Then he has to run considerable risks, for the speed that the boat attains down-river is at least double her speed when going upstream, there being the rate of the current in addition to the speed required for steerage-way. The consequence is that at every sharp corner the steamer rams the bank like a charging torpedo, leaving at various points along the route the impress of its sharp nose. A village or two were passed at places where the stream broadens out,

but I do not envy the inhabitants the position of their home, for here they are like to be devoured alive by the myriads upon myriads of mosquitoes, all athirst for human blood.

Captain Blaes was perfectly right when he maintained, 'This boat is not going to Bukama.' We safely negotiated the shallows and narrows of Kisale, only to be brought up sharply at Musongo by a bar of sand over which no ingenuity could carry us. Here then we had to leave our steamer and take to the *baleinière*. The captain said that he was obliged himself to proceed to Bukama, and I was very glad to have his company. We were terribly overcrowded in that small whaleboat. Besides our two selves there were nineteen or twenty men, who took turns at poling, so that we made rapid progress. Blaes was an accommodating individual, and a keen though undiscriminating sportsman. We disembarked at frequent intervals to scan the plain for game, and if anything were within sight, our captain would allow a reasonable interval for a stalk. Game is plentiful enough, but the grass and brushwood conceal it from view. On one occasion I marched along the bank, in a direction parallel to the course of the river, searching for antelope. In a piece of dry brushwood I caught sight of some movement, and made a cautious reconnoitre. What was my astonishment to see that the movement was caused by the huge ears of a pair of elephants, who stood facing me at a distance of less than seventy yards. This great beast, as is well known, has remarkable powers of scent and hearing, but its eyesight is feeble. The elephants could not see me, but they were quite aware of my approach. I regarded them for a minute or two. Then I called to the boy who was following some ten or fifteen yards behind me. He showed manifest signs of terror on realising his proximity to these great animals. What was I to do? I had no licence to shoot elephant; in my pouch were nothing but soft-nosed bullets, with which it is possible to enrage but not to kill an elephant; and the tusks seemed to me not to be worth the trouble and the risk. So I signed to my guide to lead off in the direction of the river, and he needed no second bidding, but glided away with what speed he could command, conditioned by the necessity of making noiseless progress.

*Lost on the Plains*

One afternoon Blaes put me down at a place where the river makes a great bend to the east. There was plenty of game on the plain, he said, and I could make a short cut across the peninsula formed by the river's detour, and join the steamer higher up. I fell in with this plan, and went ashore, followed by half a dozen men. Within fifteen minutes I had brought down a fine roan bull. Cutting off the tail to make a fly-whisk, I set off across the plain with the man who had appointed himself my gun-bearer, while the remainder of the men began to cut up the animal. It was a long march, for the peninsula was much broader than I expected. When nearing the river, my gun-bearer affirmed that he heard a shot further down the river, so to the left we turned, and forced our way through brakes of reed to the river's brink. A spit of sand lay uncovered, and on to this I made my way, looking hither and thither for signs of the steamer. I was convinced that the boat had passed on its way up the stream, but my follower shook his head so decisively that I suffered myself to be persuaded, and followed him in a downward direction. The sun had now set and tropical darkness was coming on apace. Moreover the heavens were threatening a heavy storm, and towards the east and south the sky was black with tempest-clouds. Still my man led on in a direction which I was more and more convinced was the wrong one. Savage man, though he lives in the bush and studies woodcraft from earliest childhood, is not infallible. This was not the first occasion on which I had been led astray by a native whom I trusted too utterly, and I should have followed my own judgment from the outset.

When it was quite dark I threw myself down under a mimosa, and refused to go further. I bade my man go on and search for the boat, and then come and fetch me. He moved on for some distance shouting at the top of his voice, but no answer came. At length even he appeared to be convinced that we had lost our way. Afar off upstream he saw a small light and decided that our boat must have tied up there. I was of another opinion and said that it was only the fire which we ourselves had kindled on crossing the plain, for at various points we had set fire to the dry herbage. Nevertheless, we struggled along in the darkness, making for the grass-fires.

After half an hour's marching the boy stopped and pointed to the way we had come. From that direction, he said, he heard shouts. I was loath to turn back. But what was to be done? To lie all night in the open with a downpour threatening was folly. As if to reinforce my resolution the rain began at that moment to descend. I was in despair, for I had no cloak or covering, and tropical rain chills you in five minutes' time. Fortunately the rain did not continue for long, and we were able to retrace our steps. Soon we heard voices calling quite close by, and I was congratulating myself at the thought that Blaes' search party had found us, when the men came up, and it appeared that they were the five men whom we had left behind to cut up the roan. They were just as much in the dark about the whereabouts of the steamer as we were. Here was a fine to-do. Seven hungry forwandered men, a dark and stormy night, and a camp whose position could not be located. We held a council of war. The men who had just arrived stated that they had followed the bank of the river upward, and were certain that the steamer had passed. This was exactly my view. But we lay now in the midst of a treeless plain. To the west, all along our horizon, grass fires were raging, kindled by our own hands. The precise position of the river we knew not, but its general direction we could fortunately determine from the fires. Accordingly we made a start through the wet and tangled grass. The night would have been as dark as pitch, since not a star showed through the dense clouds overhead, but the fires blazing so cheerfully two miles away illuminated the sky, and the reflected glare cast a feeble light upon our way.

After long walking one of the men declared that he saw a moving light, and presently I too was able to distinguish it. The shouting of my men now became incessant. The light grew larger: the searchers had heard us and were approaching. Then we met, and I found that the moving light which had been our friendly beacon was my own lantern, which Captain Blaes had entrusted to one of the party sent out to look for us. It was near nine when we finally got into camp, and Blaes was already in a state of great apprehension. I explained the circumstances, told of the antelope that I had shot, related the story of our wanderings, and wound up, 'Never again will I trust a native when he leads me in a direction which conflicts with my own judgment.' All 's well that ends

well. This was my last adventure on the Lualaba, for next day we reached Bukama, and our river journey came to an end.

### *Southward from Bukama*

At Bukama I seemed to have finally left the Congo proper behind, and to have arrived in a country which in outward aspect approximates as nearly as possible to South African conditions. It lies upon a regular klip-kopje, or ironstone hill, such as is extremely common in the karroo. The whole country here is of ironstone formation, and the Lualaba, breaking through this rocky barrier, rushes along in cataracts which obstruct further navigation. Hence Bukama is to be the terminus of the railway from Cape Town, and from this point it is proposed to continue the Cape-to-Cairo route by water, alternating with occasional sections of railway, along the Lualaba.

My stay at Bukama was happily brief. The hundred miles of surveyed but uncompleted railway between Bukama and Tshilonga is being attacked from both ends—vigorously from the Tshilonga side, and rather feebly, owing to lack of rails, from the Bukama side. Nevertheless, some eighteen miles have been done from the north end, and since a construction train ran on the second morning after my arrival at Bukama, I was able to push on at once. Taking leave of Captain Blaes I mounted the trucks, my goods were thrown on board, my boy scrambled up, and we were off in such a desperate hurry that poor Kalala had to leave the half of his possessions behind. This tearing haste was mere show-off, for we took five hours to do the eighteen miles—about the time which I would have covered the distance on foot. Sankishia (or Luena) is the name of the present terminus of the north section of the Bukama railway. The administration have put up a couple of buildings, and there are some ramshackle stores, but no conveniences at all for travellers. A South African who is undertaking a sub-contract on the permanent way took pity on me, and entreated me kindly for the five days of my enforced stay.

I dare say that many travellers would describe Sankishia as charmingly situated, surrounded as it is by heavy forest, and backed in some directions by low ranges; but I found it hot and uninteresting. There were hundreds of natives from various

parts of the Belgian Congo toiling at the railroad, but characteristic native villages, which always display some features that are of ethnological interest, were conspicuously absent. The woods, into which I sometimes strayed, were infested with tsetse, both of the *morsitans* and of the *palpalis* variety; nor would I have ventured out into these glades, were it not that we were badly in need of fresh meat. It may be of some interest to naturalists to know that I saw here a duiker of the yellow-backed species. Through one of those mischances which dog my footsteps I missed an easy chance at hitting it, but it was sufficiently close for me to determine what kind of antelope it was. It is certainly very unlike the ordinary duiker, being black in colour, with broad, high hindquarters, and long hair. Though smaller, it had very much the build of one of those Persian sheep which have been so largely introduced into South Africa in recent years. The one I saw was without horns, and apparently a female, and was nibbling the grass in a small glade in the midst of tolerably dense forest. Naturalists must decide whether the specimen seen by me belongs to the species *cephalophus sylvicultor* or to that of *cephalophus coxi*. For myself, I think it is more likely to be one of the latter, since the animal seen by me was by no means as large as the specimens of the *sylvicultor* described in natural-history books.

At Sankishia I had to take to the road again. The nearer one gets to civilisation, and especially to mining centres, the larger looms the question of porters. My troubles in this direction commenced at Sankishia, and did not cease before I had fairly reached the railway in South Africa, and was beyond the need of human burden-bearers. Try as I would I could not find carriers. Every available man was snapped up by the greedy contractors. And the men knew their own value, and simply shrugged their shoulders when you tried to cajole them into taking up your loads. At length I succeeded in obtaining fourteen men from a Spanish trader, who informed me that he was conferring a signal favour in letting me have them at a trifle over four francs (3s. 4d.) per man per day. As I was accustomed to pay at the rate of half a franc (fivepence) per man per day, it took me some time to discover where the favour came in, and even to-day I still rather suspect that Domingos made a nice penny out of me.

We got off from Sankishia on the 16th September, and

marched all day along the earthworks of the new railway. I was informed, however, that the line surveyed has been condemned as leading through mountains of too great difficulty, and a new survey ordered. So the money expended on this sixteen miles of earthworks has been simply dropped into the water. The marching was pleasant and easy, but the tsetse were a terror. I could not venture to sit down for a moment, but one of these treacherous beasties would creep up behind and drive his poisoned proboscis deep into my skin. All day I had to keep waving a small branch behind my back to keep the tsetse from settling under the posterior brim of my hat, and carrying on a guerilla warfare upon the unprotected portion of my neck. That night we camped at the deserted house of a white man, near to the Kaluli River. I was glad to find some protection, for tent I had none. During my trip on the Lualaba, Captain Blaes haled my tent from the hold and put it ashore at Kabalo, thinking it belonged to one of the 'Bula Matadi.' I never saw it again. Nor do I think that I shall ever see a penny of compensation for it.

### *By Road and by Railroad*

Next morning I was in the thick of carrier troubles. Two of my hardly acquired men had evidently discovered that the loads they bore were spoiling the cut of their hair, and they decamped during the night. This was a nice fix to be in. There was not a village along the route, and the solitary native in charge of the absentee white man's house and belongings could neither go himself nor find another in his stead. What was I to do? Now by some good chance a young one-eyed lad had attached himself to my *safari*, intent upon getting to Elisabethville—that magnet which draws natives from all parts. I had no alternative but to select a light load and impress this lad. My faithful Kalala had to shoulder another easy weight; and to induce the men whose two loads these were to relinquish them for others, required, let me assure you, no little persuasion. Patience and persistence, however, can work wonders in Africa, and after a shorter delay than I anticipated we were under way, and the march of a new day had commenced. My carriers were poor hands, and I was compelled to walk last of all, in order to keep an eye on stragglers and shirkers, to encourage the feeble-hearted,

expedite the dilatory, and gently prod the laggard and the lazy. Here let me say this, that I once had occasion to carry a forty-five-pound package on my shoulder for a distance of three-quarters of a mile, and I was just about beaten when I reached home. Since that day I have had great sympathy for carriers, who during the heat of the day, and over toilsome and stony roads, bear patiently and unmurmuringly their burdens of fifty or sixty pounds. Few of those who revile the 'lazy porter' have ever sweated and strained under a fifty-pound load for even a mile. Had they done so, and were there but one drop of 'the milk of human kindness' in their constitution, they would regard the African loadsman with compassion, and bear patiently with his many faults and foibles.

Let me hasten on. Our path, which led over stony mountains and steep hills, brought us at the end of four days to the point at which the advance guard of the southern construction are building the permanent way, and bridging the vales and the gullies. The sub-contractors on this section of the line are chiefly Italians. We made fairly good progress as soon as we were able to march on the earthworks, and presently, on the sixth day out from Sankishia, reached the railhead. The engineers on this section were Englishmen, and they informed me that they were laying the rails at the rate of one and a quarter miles per day, and would be able to do nearly double were it not for the limited supply of railing material. By their courtesy I was permitted to mount the trucks; my carriers joyfully placed their loads on board; Kalala clambered up, and we steamed off, while the rain, which fortunately had kept off until that moment, poured down upon our undefended heads. However, I was in railroad communication with Cape Town, and that was sufficient compensation for twenty showers like the present; and so, wet but cheerful, I was borne swiftly to Tshilonga, the present terminus of the Cape-to-Cairo line.

The excellent and comfortable coaches of the Rhodesia Railway ply between Tshilonga and Bulawayo, and after the many weary miles which I had trudged I promised myself the delight of lying stretched upon a cushioned seat while the train raced in a single day through distances which I could not have compassed in three weeks. Alas! my usual ill-luck followed me, and I arrived at Tshilonga on the evening of the day on which the weekly train for Elisabethville left. No

NATIVE VILLAGE WITH LOOK-OUT TREE

train for another week! Well no, not quite so bad as that. The tardy passenger has an alternative: he may travel by goods-train for a first-class fare. Rather than lie for a week at Tshilonga I accepted the alternative, and made ready to leave at seven next morning. The goods-train which brought me to Tshilonga had deposited me and mine more than half a mile away from the passenger station. I had no men to carry my loads over that half mile, nor could I find any. I applied to the station-master. Do you think he would stir a finger to assist me? Not a bit of it. I reasoned with him, I implored him, I threatened him; but he was adamant. Then his engine shunted until it stood within thirty yards of where my loads lay. I besought him to allow the stoker and the stoker's man to assist my boy to put the goods on board of the tender. *He refused.* Were it not that the engine-driver himself were moved to pity me, I would never have got on board. But the engine-driver was a man of another stamp. He ordered his men to assist my boy, made room for my loads on his engine and tender, and enabled me to get them safely into the truck assigned me. I told the ungracious station-master, whose name was Fauconier, that I would report him to his superiors in Elisabethville; and only lack of time prevented my doing so. It gives me pain to have to report discourtesy on the part of some Belgian officials, when the vast majority with whom I had to do were exceptionally friendly and affable. There were but three discourteous men, and I forbear to mention the names of the other two.

At Kambove, which lies halfway between Tshilonga and Elisabethville I came into touch with the mission of the American Episcopal Church of America. Mr. and Mrs. Springer, old friends of mine, who at one time laboured in Mashonaland, were absent on furlough, but Mr. Guptill and his wife were carrying on the work. This mission has a grand opportunity. The rich copper mines of Elisabethville and Kambove are great centres of labour. Recruiting agents are busy from year's end to year's end finding men to work in the mines. The evangelistic opportunity is immense. Men who have heard the Gospel here, and have found salvation, can carry the good news east and west, and north and south. The Episcopal Methodist Mission is only in its beginnings. A white man must be stationed at Elisabethville, which at present is only worked by native evangelists. Schools must

be opened, and teachers for these schools trained. The field is wide and promising, and it is to be hoped that Mr. Springer will return from the States with a body of earnest and qualified assistants.

In the vicinity of Kambove, some sixty miles away, is Koni Hill, a station of the Garenganze Mission, which is identified with the name of that strenuous man and devoted missionary, Frederick Arnot. To my great regret I could not find time to visit Koni Hill, nor indeed any of the centres of Arnot's Mission. If I had carried out my original plan I would have touched at Luanza, the station of Mr. Dan Crawford, author of *Thinking Black*. The conditions prevailing along the frontier of German East Africa between Tanganyika and Nyasa made it inadvisable for me to proceed that way, and I decided, therefore, to travel south by rail as far as Broken Hill, in Northern Rhodesia, and then march due east to the shores of Lake Nyasa. It is more than a quarter of a century since Arnot made his way into Garenganze ; for so men called the territory of the great Msidi, who from being the son of a slave-trader rose to become the most powerful chief in South Congoland. But the story of Msidi and of the empire which he founded—and lost—cannot be told here.

# CHAPTER XXIV

## A TRAMP THROUGH NORTHERN RHODESIA

Cast the window wider, sonny,
  Let me see the veld
Rolling grandly to the sunset,
  Where the mountains melt;
With the sharp horizon round it,
  Like a silver belt.

Years and years I've trekked across it,
  Ridden back and fore;
Till the silence and the glamour
  Ruled me to the core.
No man ever knew it better,
  None could love it more.

There's a balm for crippled spirits
  In the open view,
Running from your very footsteps
  Out into the blue,—
Like a wagon-track to heaven,
  Straight 'twixt God and you.

There's the sum of all religion
  In its mightiness;
Winged truths, beyond your doubting,
  Close about you press.
God is greater in the open—
  Little man is less.

PERCEVAL GIBBON.

### *Across the Border into Rhodesia*

ELISABETHVILLE, the capital of the district of Katanga, has a white population greater than that of any other town in the Belgian Congo. In the heyday of its prosperity the numbers ran up to considerably over a thousand, but since the extension of the railway they have come down again, until at present they are not much more, I suppose, than seven hundred and fifty. The streets of the township have been regularly laid out, and the authorities have, fortunately, not committed

the vandalism of cutting down all the indigenous forest, so that one enjoys long and delightful vistas down avenues that are partly European and partly African. This is in harmony with the whole character of the place, which represents civilisation impinging upon and modifying barbarism, but unable wholly to transform it. There are some buildings, both public and private, that front the street with a fair appearance of solidity, but of whose architecture not much can be predicated.

All the prosperity of Elisabethville, and indeed of Katanga generally, centres in the mines. The whole country contains copper ore of the richest quality, some mines producing ore which shows from eighty to ninety per cent. of pure copper. This ore, at the time of my visit, fetched £96 per ton at the mouth of the mine, and I make no doubt but that the strenuous demand for copper in the war zone has sent the price up still higher. But copper, though the chief, is not the only mineral wealth that the Katanga contains. There is a gold mine at Ruwe; ironstone hills are widely distributed; tin is found on the western edge of the copper belt; it is also claimed that there are large areas of diamondiferous rock. The wealth of the northern and central portions of Congo Belge lies in their forests of rubber and palm, in their plantations of coffee and cocoa, and in their uncounted herds of elephants with the vast yield of ivory which they produce. But the wealth of Southern Congoland lies concealed under the soil, and the Katanga district, from a mineralogical and geological point of view, reveals distinct affinities with Southern Africa and Rhodesia, rather than with Central and East Africa.

There are two through connections per week between Elisabethville and Bulawayo, and after a short stay of less than forty hours I was able to be away. At long last I found the comfort which I had hoped for at Tshilonga, and as I was smoothly whirled away in the roomy, padded *coupé*, I could not but contrast my present luxurious mode of travel with the delays and discomforts of the river, and with the sweat and strain of the daily tramp. The daily tramp, however, was far from ended. There still lay before me nearly three hundred miles of overland trek to the mission-fields of Lake Nyasa. All too soon the railway journey came to an end, and I disembarked at Broken Hill on the 27th September. My first duty

was to look up the agent of the African Lakes Corporation, that trading concern that at one time was all-powerful in Nyasaland, and that even to-day is the chief of the mercantile enterprises. When I announced my name, 'Why,' said the agent, 'you are supposed to be dead.'

'Dead,' I replied; 'but why?'

'Well, there were a number of carriers here for you about two months ago, and when a wire came to call them back to Fort Jameson, I concluded that you were dead.'

'No,' I replied, 'I 'm not dead yet, and I would like very much to have my carriers.'

'But you can't have them,' said the agent; 'there 's not a carrier to be had in Broken Hill for love or money: the Government has commandeered every man Jack of them to carry war loads to the East African front.'

And so I found it to be. I repaired without loss of time to the office of the local magistrate, and found fifteen hundred men lying around, all waiting for loads; but not a carrier could be spared for me. At length the courteous official promised to try and find me three or four men who had fulfilled their contract, and who might be willing to carry loads as far as Mkushi, seventy miles distant. Next day he sent me five, and with these I had to be content. My baggage I divided into three parts, one to go with me, one to be despatched straight to Cape Town, and one to be left at Broken Hill to follow later on.

On the morning when I set forth, a lad of eighteen years attached himself to me, saying that he wanted to go to Fort Jameson. His appearance was providential. Kalala had turned back at Elisabethville, after serving me faithfully for nearly four months. For the present trip I was quite without a personal boy. Now it seems a slight thing to carry your own rifle, and when you reach your camp to cook your own food and unpack your own bed. Every Boy Scout does that, and would ridicule the idea of having a fag to perform these offices for him. Well, all that I can say is that I 'm not a Boy Scout, and that when I have trudged fifteen or eighteen miles I object to having to lie on my knees before the fire, boiling soup and rice. Therefore I repeat that the unexpected arrival of this boy, who hailed from a station of the London Mission near Tanganyika, and answered to the name of Tomasi, was providential. He was not a great cook, but at least he could

watch the saucepan and assist me to arrange the bed, and by the time I parted from him he had learned to make himself very generally useful.

*On Trek again*

After four days' steady marching we arrived at the Mkushi government post, where my carriers, having fulfilled their contract, had to be paid off. On no conditions would they re-book, not even for the offer of very much advanced pay. Where was I to obtain others? The magistrate, Mr. Harrington, who showed me great kindness, promised to try and find me some. He was as good as his word, and on the Monday afternoon—I had arrived the previous Saturday—I was able to proceed. My new men did not inspire me with confidence. Two of them were old and feeble. I assigned them the easiest loads and hoped for the best. But two days later I saw that unless I eased their burdens still further they would inevitably collapse. It was impossible to persuade a man from any village to take up my packages. Finally a couple of small boys volunteered, and dividing two loads into four, I departed, with age and youth carrying burdens of equal weight. For five days we were struggling with the Muchinga Mountains, a range of quartz hills stretching in north-easterly and south-westerly direction. It was the height of the dry season. The rains were due, and none had fallen for five or six months. The Muchingas were arid and barren to a degree, and at times we had to cover long stretches in which was no drop of water. One evening at sundown we found ourselves in a picturesque gorge, with a rocky watercourse running parallel to the pathway. It was necessary to camp, but where were we to find water? We hunted high and low in the watercourse, without discovering a trace of water, nor even so much as a moist spot suggesting the presence of a subterranean supply. I was for pushing on, but the weary men shook their heads. Very well, then there is nothing to be done but to go thirsty and supperless to bed, and make an early start to-morrow for the nearest water!

At this moment there was a shout higher up the gorge. One of the youngsters had found a little hoard of water in a hollow rock. We hastened to the spot. Yes, there was the water, looking somewhat green and slimy, but water for all that. The countenances that a moment before were drawn

with apprehension were now wreathed in smiles. We slaked our thirst—at least, the others did: I refused to touch the water until it was thoroughly boiled and set before me in the state of tea. And so a gracious Providence again watched over us, and as of old the rock in the wilderness yielded its supply of precious moisture.

The Luangwa River is one of the most considerable of the northern tributaries of the Zambesi. After twelve years I was revisiting this stream, the course of which I followed to its confluence with the Zambesi in 1903. A little to the west of the river I met the carriers who had been despatched to fetch me by my friends in our Rhodesian mission-field. From this point my troubles with loadsmen were at an end: six of the men who met me proceeded to Broken Hill to fetch away the goods left behind, and the remainder returned with me to Nyanji—the most westerly of the stations of our Rhodesian Mission. These carriers brought me a tent, which greatly added to my comfort after so much camping in the open, as well as many smaller luxuries which my friends had thoughtfully forwarded.

My caravan had now doubled its numbers, and as the Luangwa valley is a famous haunt of wild game, I remained over a forenoon to secure some meat. I brought down three *mpala* (*œpyceros melampus*) in as many shots, and as I considered that an ample supply for twelve or fifteen men, I turned homeward. Another small herd of *mpala* stood looking at us, and my guides implored me to fire. Wishing to humour them, but unwilling to bring down another antelope, I aimed carelessly, and unfortunately hit my quarry. Down came the buck, but as we advanced to pick it up, it suddenly rose and made off, with my men in hot pursuit. I moved forward about fifty yards, and saw in the gloaming of the forest a herd of waterbuck gazing steadfastly in our direction. Again without definite intention to hit I fired, and a great bull fell to the earth and lay struggling in a cloud of dust. By this time two of my guides had come up with me. We proceeded to the fallen animal, which it seemed I had shot through the spine, and stood round it watching its struggles. The chief huntsman, armed with a powerful spear, was still in pursuit of the *mpala*, and as I was somewhat short of cartridges, I waited for him to return and put an end to the waterbuck, which appeared to be *in articulo mortis*. The

huntsman came running up, brandishing his long weapon, and darted at the prostrate animal. The waterbuck, struck with terror, made a supreme effort, and succeeded in getting on to its legs. Our valiant huntsman, seeing that his prey was about to escape him, rushed up and thrust the spear into its side. The buck at the same moment plunged forward, jerking the assegai from his pursuer's hand; and the next thing we saw was the great antelope disappearing into the forest with a valuable native spear projecting from its body. My men, of course, set off on its spoor, but it was a race of tortoise against hare, and though they followed long and far, no trace of the antelope could they obtain. The owner of the spear was utterly crestfallen, for besides bungling his attack on the buck he had lost a valuable weapon. I have no doubt that the antelope soon scraped off the intrusive spear-point and is now still roaming the forest glades. As for my own shot, I conclude that it just touched one of the bones of the spinal column, partially paralysing the animal, so that when the first shock had subsided he was able to rise and make off.

The heat in the Luangwa valley was unendurable. The trees were stripped of every leaf, and shade there was none. The breathless air was hot and oppressive like the atmosphere of a Turkish bath. On days like these I found it better, paradoxical though the statement seem, to be marching than resting. For when moving along one creates a current of air that seems at any rate to enter the lungs, but when standing quiet in the insufficient shadow of a tree-trunk, the dull, heavy atmosphere weighs you down like a blanket of lead. It was difficult to get my men moving at 2.30 in the afternoon, for they complained of the heat quite as much as I did; only they placed their hands, not as I would, on the crown of the head, but on the soles of the feet, in order to indicate the degree of torridity. No African ever experiences any inconvenience through having the sun's rays fall on his bald pate; but he suffers when his bare soles light upon the burning sand.

In spite of the overwhelming heat we made a good afternoon's trek from the Luangwa, reaching at nightfall the village of Ngambwa, eleven miles from the river. Here I came upon the first out-school of the Rhodesia Mission, lying at a distance of one hundred miles from Nyanji. Great thoughts stirred

in me, and a profound gratitude to God possessed my soul, when I remembered that twelve years ago I traversed the whole district from Fort Jameson to the Luangwa, without finding a single station, a single out-school, or a single evangelist. Only at Madzimoyo, a dozen miles from the capital, had our Mission then made a small start; but under the blessing of God the work has since assumed great proportions, and the whole region is covered with a network of schools, controlled from three central stations.

### *Looking Around—and Within*

Most of the villages which I passed, and all the important ones, possess a school, an evangelist-teacher, and one or two assistant-teachers. It was interesting to observe the influence exercised over the heathen environment by the Christian element. The school-building, which is also the church, is easily the most conspicuous feature of the town. It is generally built immediately outside, but within fifty or a hundred yards of, the conglomeration of huts that form the *kraal*; and in the early morning or late evening one sees men, women, and children wending their way hither, in order to attend the devotional services which commence and end the day. For a couple of hours during the forenoon regular classes are held. These are generally of an elementary nature. Men and women, boys and girls are all conning their letters; for whether the motive which animates them be, as we hope it is, the desire to become members of the Church, or whether it be, as we sometimes fear, merely the ambition to obtain a smattering of the white man's knowledge—learn to read they must. And thus the school becomes the focus of the larger life that begins to manifest itself in the community. Heathen practices and beliefs, of course, survive. Witchcraft is illegal, but heathen dances as such are not suppressed by law, and exercise a still powerful influence, which unhappily affects even the Christian section. But with all discounting, Christianity has obtained a firm hold upon the national heart and conscience, and the difference between the country as I saw it in 1903 and the country as it is now, is calculated to silence the most captious critic of missions, and to fill the friends of the great cause with gratitude and enthusiasm.

I shall not soon forget the Sunday which I spent at a village called Tongamara. It was a busy day for the teacher.

After early-morning prayers, he assembled the class of immediate candidates for baptism. It consisted of twenty-one persons who have already passed through a year's, or it may be a two years' instruction in the Bible and the catechism. They are now in the last year of their probationary course, and the acquaintance which they have with Scripture history would astonish and shame many more favoured candidates for church membership. After he has conducted this class, the teacher allows himself and his hearers a short respite, and then, at 9.30, transformed into an evangelist, he preaches to an audience that crowds his little school building to overflowing. His subject was the 'lake of fire' in Rev. xx., and though, from inacquaintance with the language, I was able to follow only very imperfectly, I saw that he held his audience enthralled, and cannot doubt but that there was blessing upon the weak endeavour. The singing of these natives struck me as being particularly good. In most cases the natives, when not sternly drilled by a good European leader, relapse into falsity of tone and tardiness of tempo, and I was exceedingly pleased to find the voices harmonising, and the time not only not retarding but positively increasing in speed towards the end. The singing of that ancient favourite, 'There is a fountain filled with blood' (in the local language 'Kasope ali wodzaza'), was particularly inspiring. In the afternoon our evangelist again held forth to his audience, and the attendance was quite as good as earlier in the day. The light thus kindled at remote Tongamara may be feeble, but it has at least dispelled a Stygian darkness: the truth proclaimed may not be free from some alloy of imperfection, but at any rate it is truth and not error, and proceeds from heaven and not from the abyss.

The landscape between the Luangwa and the eastern boundary of Northern Rhodesia presents a by no means smooth superficies. At first sight it appears to be a great plain with a gradual westward and southward slope to the Luangwa, but in reality it is broken country, intercepted by ranges of low hills, between which wind great *dambos*, *i.e.* open, grass-covered valleys, generally moist and fertile, and often the home of herds of zebra, eland, roan, sable, and waterbuck. In spite of these meadow-like valleys I cannot call this country well watered. At many of the villages at which we halted the supply of water was both scanty and bad. The streams

had ceased to flow, the wells were dry, and the springs failed to yield their customary supply. This lack of surface-water is a serious handicap. Our Mission should long ago have established a European station in the midst of this populous area, but the sites are all so badly off for water, that it is difficult to decide where to settle.

Apart from the lack of pure and abundant water on the route, I marched along cheerfully from day to day. Anxiety was at an end. My carriers were strong and willing men—Christians, too, most of them—and I was not troubled by thoughts about possible desertions, or anxiety as to route and lodgment. As soon as we had left the valley of the Luangwa behind the excessive heat moderated, and marching across the broad, hot veld, if not always a positive pleasure was at all events not a sensible fatigue. Morning after morning we rose as the first red streaks began to tinge the eastern horizon, and striding to meet the rising sun, we saw paleness turn to red, and red to scarlet, and scarlet to yellow and gold. It is astonishing with what incredible rapidity the silent advance of day chases away the shades of night. At first you march with doubt and hesitation: true, the road is visible, stretching straight and white before you into the blackness, but you cannot distinguish a stone from a grass-tuft nor a mound from a hollow. Presently the objects in front of you exchange their ghostliness for definite outlines, and you step out with greater confidence and vigour. You cast your eyes over the landscape: it still seems peopled with giant phantoms, and everything shows blurred and indistinct, except where the silhouette of some lofty tree outlines itself against the clear heavens. But as you gaze the rising light overspreads the vague and tumbled masses that intervene between yourself and the far horizon; they stand out more clearly; hill and dale disengage themselves from their midnight embrace; forest dissevers itself from grassy meadow; rocks rise with bold ruggedness from the gentle bosom of the plain that sustains them. In a few moments it is broad day; the sun bursts over the horizon, and races steadily for the zenith. The morning air fills and invigorates the lungs, vapours and mists vanish from the mind with the retreat of darkness, and you face the demands of the new day with a courage that no weariness can vanquish, and a calm confidence that no uncertainty can shake.

There is no balm for a wounded spirit like the open veld. There is no corrective for the meanness and the selfishness which rule our social life like the broad prairie and the rolling hills. In these wide solitudes the spirit recovers its calm simplicity, views all things in a true perspective, and revises its estimate of the respective values to be placed upon men's praise and men's blame. On the lonely march, in the evening silence beside the camp-fire, and during all the weary weeks when you are isolated from men of like colour and like speech as yourself, you have time and opportunity to search your conscience, to track faults, winnow sins, and remedy defects of character.

> 'For we, brought forth and reared in hours
> Of change, alarm, surprise—
> What shelter to grow ripe is ours?
> What leisure to grow wise?'

### *Missionary Progress and Hindrances*

On the last day of my cross-country march I made a very early start at 4.30, and by 8.45 had covered the fifteen miles which separated me from Nyanji. It was one of the gladdest days of my two years' tour. Once again I was among my own countrymen, renewing old acquaintances and making new ones, revisiting scenes that I had seen twelve years ago, and contemplating with great interest the marvellous extension of missionary activity since then. Mr. van Schalkwyk, now stationed here at Nyanji, was then missionary at Madzimoyo, and, with a colleague, responsible for a territory two hundred miles long by seventy-five broad, which was still wholly unoccupied. To-day the same territory is worked from three main stations and three hundred and fifty-six outstations: there are six hundred and seventy-eight baptized Christians and two thousand three hundred and nine in the baptism class, while no less than twenty-three thousand children attend the schools. No commentary is necessary on these figures, but the reader may imagine what feelings surged in my heart when I compared the conditions of 1903 with those which prevail to-day.

Since I had been twenty days on the march from Broken Hill, I felt at liberty to enjoy a thorough rest at Nyanji, and remained here accordingly for five days. In many of the mission-fields through which I passed there was a great dearth

of children, but I am happy to think that in the mission-fields of the Dutch Reformed Church the balance is redressed. Those who know something of the history of South Africa will remember that when those famous old pioneers, the *Voortrekkers*, moved away from their old homes into the wilderness, and began to colonise the territory which to-day forms the Orange Free State, the Transvaal, and Natal, they placed their wives and children in the roomy ox-wagon, and trekked into the unknown, not as individuals prospecting for wealth, but as families intent on founding new homes. The same spirit actuates the South African missionary to-day: he goes to Central Africa and builds, not a house to sojourn in for a brief term or two, but a home to abide in. His family grows up around him, and he does all he can to preserve intact the bond between children and parents, until the urgent necessity for higher education than the home can afford forces him to send them south. A movement is now afoot for establishing at some central station in this field a home for mission children, where instruction can be given in the higher standards, and the evil day still further postponed which sees the final rupture of home ties. This is as it should be, in my opinion, at least for all parts where the climate does not actually forbid, and until medical opinion is insistent that the children shall be sent out of the country.

Our next station, Nsadzu, lies at a distance of forty-five miles from Nyanji, and this portion of the journey I negotiated on a bicycle. Old methods of locomotion were passed away, and I did in half a day what under the old foot-régime would have taken three days. The scenery about these two stations is decidedly pretty. Of course we have the forest, but it is not the dense, dark, impenetrable forest of Central Congoland, but what I call thin forest, consisting of *mopani* trees and acacias with occasional euphorbias, and in the deep valleys also of kigelias, native mahogany and native teak. Huge isolated granite rocks raise their heads above the plain. Nyanji lies between two such rocky kopjes, and Nsadzu occupies the crest of a quartz hillock that commands a grand panorama of plain and forest and giant boulders, with a range of blue hills at its feet and another range on the western horizon. Mr. Smit and his wife, who are in charge of this station, are the oldest missionaries in the D.R. Rhodesian Mission, and have therefore the closest possible knowledge of

the growth and progress of the work, since its inception to the present day.

Twelve years ago the D.R. Mission had no competitors in this field. It was the policy of the late Mr. Robert Codrington, at that time administrator of North-eastern Rhodesia, to delimit fields of labour so as to leave to each mission scope enough to develop itself according to its own genius, and to prevent the unseemly strife and discord which arise when missions of divergent views—Protestant and Catholic or Anglican—are thrown together in the same sphere. Later administrators rescinded this salutary rule, or at least showed themselves unable to enforce it, with the result that both the Anglicans (Universities' Mission) and the Roman Catholics have intruded into the area which Mr. Codrington assigned the Dutch Reformed Church.

And now follows something which shows the policy of Codrington to have been perfectly right, and wholly justifies his wisdom and foresight. In the neighbouring protectorate of Nyasaland the delimitation policy has never been followed, and the Roman Catholics were allowed to enter fields which were already occupied by other missions. The results of this course of action are suggested in the following report of the Nyasaland Native Rising Commission (of which more anon):

'48. One other point in connection with Missions we feel bound to mention. This is the unfortunate rivalry which exists in different places between the Protestant and Roman Catholic Missions (French Fathers — White and Marist). This rivalry has occasionally led to serious friction between their adherents.

'It has also led to publication in the native language of intolerant criticism of rival Missions, and this tends to introduce a spirit of fanatical sectarianism which is to be deplored.

'This rivalry is unfortunate, but it is the unavoidable outcome of the Protestant and Roman Catholic Missions being in close proximity.

'While it is undesirable for Government to interfere with religious differences, we think it might prove necessary in some cases, in order to preserve the peace, for Government to delimit different spheres of influence, and we recommend that powers should be taken for this purpose.'

Such is the deliberate report and opinion of the Commission

appointed by the Government of the Nyasaland Protectorate to inquire, *inter alia*, into 'the effects of Mission teaching—religious, educational or industrial—on the native mind and character.' On this Commission, be it said, there was but one missionary—an Anglican.

### *Madzimoyo and Fort Jameson*

At Nsadzu I remained three days, and then resumed my journey, this time on donkey-back, for Madzimoyo. Twelve years before I was present when the site for this station was decided upon, and assisted in changing the name from Madzimavi, signifying *poison water*, to Madzimoyo, the meaning of which is *water of life*; and truly this station has been a source whence the water of life has flowed to carry life and spiritual fertility to a people that hitherto had quenched their thirst at unwholesome and poisoned springs. Instead of the wattle-and-daub construction in which I stayed with my two friends Charles Hofmeyr and van Schalkwyk in those days, I now beheld a flourishing station, with a fine church, a hospital, a schoolroom, and three commodious residences for the staff. On the Sunday I addressed about eleven hundred persons in the church, Mr. Pauw, the missionary in charge, interpreting. Since the death of that devoted medical missionary, Dr. Jan Hofmeyr, there has been no doctor at this station, to the loss of the work and the anxiety of the other missionaries. The medical work and dispensing is done in the meantime by two young ladies, who are really responsible for school-work. The local school is largely attended, and a normal class of teachers, with thirty students, was under instruction at the time of my visit.

From Madzimoyo it was a short morning's ride to Fort Jameson, only twelve miles distant. This was the centre of the administration of North-eastern Rhodesia, but since the two provinces of Northern Rhodesia have been merged into one, the capital is now established at Livingstone, near the Victoria Falls. Fort Jameson, then, has seen its palmiest days, though as a centre of commerce and industry it still retains considerable importance. Besides the offices and residences of the resident magistrate and other Government officials, there are several stores and some public buildings. In addition to the church and houses of the Dutch Reformed Mission, which is capably conducted by Mr. Kies, there are

also the buildings of the Anglican (Universities') Mission, centring around a neat little church. I had some intercourse with Archdeacon De la Pryme, who is in charge of the work here, and learned that the Universities' Mission has another main station at Msoro, a large native village lying sixty miles or so to the west.

Quite a number of white settlers have purchased farms in the neighbourhood of Fort Jameson, and are earning a good livelihood by raising cattle and planting cotton and tobacco. The country seems eminently adapted for the tobacco-plant, so much so that the United Tobacco Companies have embarked a considerable capital in the country and put up several large buildings near the township for the purpose of drying, storing, and packing tobacco. The question of transport to the coast is always urgent, but a fly-free road available for wagons is open from here to the edge of the Shire valley, and it is hoped that it will soon be completed as far as Blantyre, which is connected by railway and steamer with Chinde on the east coast.

From Fort Jameson I proceeded by bicycle to Magwero, the first station founded in these parts, and now already sixteen years old. The population has shown a steady drift towards the unoccupied lands of the west, and the mission work is not so important as it once was. Magwero is at present in charge of a farmer missionary, who has the care of several hundreds of head of cattle, as well as of fields and gardens, dams and furrows, and the supervision of carpentry, tanning and bootmaking departments. It may be imagined that he is a very busy man. The produce of the gardens finds a ready sale in Fort Jameson, where there is a particularly keen demand for butter and for wheat.

I find that I have said nothing about the people who inhabit the stretch of country between the Luangwa and Fort Jameson. The language spoken in this region is called Chinyanja, that is, the language of the lake (Nyasa). When Livingstone visited the country the inhabitants were known as Maravi, but the common designation for them to-day is the A-nyanja, or Lake people, these again being split up into a number of tribes, such as the A-chewa, A-chipeta and Basenga. The Ba-senga live along the course and in the valley of the Luangwa. Their language is merely a dialect of Chinyanja, and they were perfectly able to understand the few

A SPECIMEN OF NATIVE ART (BRITISH NYASALAND)

words that I addressed them in that tongue. I venture to think that Chi-nyanja is destined to become the one language for the peoples who dwell on the shores of Lake Nyasa, and inhabit the country to the west as far as the Muchinga mountains, and even beyond. It is the language employed in the schools of the Established Church of Scotland, the Zambesi Industrial Mission, the Nyasa Industrial Mission, the Dutch Reformed Church, the Universities' Mission, and (partially) the Free Church of Scotland.

There is not much that is distinctive about the Ba-senga. They are fairly well clothed, both sexes decking themselves in European calicoes and prints. The villages, while not arranged street-wise in the orderly fashion of Central Congoland, are nevertheless well-built, tolerably tidy, and frequently surrounded by a grass fence, that gives a certain amount of security against the depredations of leopards and hyenas. The women are much better clothed than was the case when I passed here in 1903, and it is rare to find a woman or grown girl that has not a piece of cloth coming up to the armpits. Among the older women of the Ba-senga the *pelele* or lip-ring is still frequently seen. The upper lip, less often also the lower, is pierced in early girlhood, and the hole thus made is artificially enlarged, until it can contain an ivory ring, a disc of light metal, or a piece of wood, which may be two inches or even more in diameter. We meet with this curious fashion all over the continent, and it is even more pronounced in the basin of the Shari and Lake Chad than in the basin of the Shire and Lake Nyasa; so that we again begin to wonder whether after all it is not a relic of ancient slave-raiding days, when men deliberately disfigured their wives and their daughters, in order to destroy their beauty and render them undesirable objects in the eyes of those who dealt in human flesh. Thus do customs persist long after the reasons which give rise to their first introduction have passed away.

# CHAPTER XXV

## NYASALAND FROM NORTH TO SOUTH

> The world sits at the feet of Christ,
> Unknowing, blind and unconsoled;
> It yet shall touch His garment's fold,
> And feel the heavenly Alchemist
> Transform its very dust to gold.
>
> WHITTIER.

ON arriving in Nyasaland I looked upon my long tour as practically concluded. I had in a sense reached home, and was again among my own folk, speaking my own language, and discussing over the weekly paper the affairs of my own country. In a former book, *A Thousand Miles in the Heart of Africa*, published in 1904, I have given some description of the physical aspect of Nyasaland, of its inhabitants, and of the nature of the work which is being done by the missionaries. There is therefore the less necessity to cover the ground again. Instead of giving a detailed account of my journeyings from place to place, I propose to sketch in rapid review the work of the various missions of the country, and in so doing to traverse Nyasaland from north to south.

The whole of the west shore of Lake Nyasa falls to Great Britain, while on the east Portugal and Germany (in 1915) own portions of the littoral. The boundary between the Protectorate and Rhodesia runs along the watershed which divides the basins of the lake and the Luangwa River, and since this watershed extends parallel to the lake shore at distances of from fifty to eighty miles, it is evident that Nyasaland is a long, narrow strip of territory, broadening out at the southern end like the bulge at the bottom of a thermometer. The impetus given to missionary enterprise by the death of Livingstone in 1873 was first felt in the regions about Lake Nyasa, which are to-day one of the best evangelised areas in Africa. Commencing our survey from the north, we find ourselves first of all in the sphere of the United Free

Church of Scotland, and at the station called Livingstonia, or Kondowi, known also more familiarly as the 'Institution.'

The situation is unrivalled for beauty, not only in this mission-field, but perhaps even in the rest of the continent. Picture to yourself a lofty plateau, or rather, a broad, flat-topped spur, projecting from a still loftier mountain to the west. This miniature plateau lies at an altitude of two thousand feet above the lake, which is itself more than sixteen hundred feet above sea-level. The background of the station site is formed by the high range referred to; eastwards it commands a magnificent view of the lake, broken off towards the south by a hill which thrusts its crest between the spectator and his outlook. The lake at this point is almost at its narrowest, and permits of distinct glimpses into the ravines which gash the sides of the mountains on the further shore. The gleaming surface of the lake stretches beneath us not more than four miles away, as the crow flies, and the steamers that ply to and fro are clearly visible when the atmosphere is free of haze. The northern and southern horizons are broken by masses of mountains, from which streams of the purest and coolest water rush headlong down to the lake. One of these streams has been harnessed for use. At a cost of some thousands of pounds sterling a water and lighting scheme has been carried out, a reservoir built, pipes laid, a generating plant erected, and electric light and power carried to every part of the Institution, to illuminate the dwellings and set in motion the machinery.

The homes of the missionaries stand upon the brow of the plateau, overlooking the lake. Behind them are the large, well-equipped hospital, the school buildings, the workshops, the post-office with its clock-tower, and the beautiful church which is rising in memory of Lord Overtoun, the warm friend and generous benefactor of the Mission. The streets of the station are lined with cedars from the Mlanje district in south Nyasaland, and fine roads lead in all directions from the Institution, scaling the most precipitous mountains by easy gradients. The road down to the lake shore, which cost three thousand pounds, is nearly eleven miles long, and constitutes a most remarkable piece of engineering, for which the credit belongs to Dr. Laws. The scenery along this road, which is flanked by a mountain torrent and picturesque waterfalls, is most delightful.

The moving spirit in the great undertakings which centre in Livingstonia is Dr. Robert Laws, to whom no one can deny the name of the 'grand old man' of Nyasaland. He is the oldest missionary, in years as well as in service, and was the pioneer of Christian enterprise in these regions. Arriving in Nyasaland in 1875, he has toiled patiently at his task for forty years, valiantly seconded by his devoted wife, and with the lapse of years he has witnessed many of his schemes materialising. Some there are who think these schemes too large, too vast, for the present stage of development of the native people and the mission enterprise. That may be, for Dr. Laws is a man who looks into the future, and prepares to meet not merely the needs of the hour but the needs which will arise to-morrow. He is ahead of his time, but so are all those who see visions and dream dreams. The Institution, when complete, will be his monument, and will bear the inscription—invisible, perhaps, but true—

'He builded better than he knew;—
The conscious stone to beauty grew.'

After a four days' stay at Livingstonia we took our departure. Who the 'we' are I must briefly explain. In order to make it possible for me to visit some of the stations of the Livingstonia Mission, Mr. Retief, the D.R. missionary at Mvera, volunteered to take me on the carrier of his motor-cycle. This mode of transit I had never yet essayed; and after having made a prolonged trial of it for nigh on five hundred miles, I can say with sincerity that I will never, unless under the stress of dire compulsion, essay it again. I intend no affront to my generous brother Retief, still less to his noble machine; for with the assistance of this swift means of locomotion I saw in a fortnight what otherwise would have demanded two months; but nothing will persuade me to mount the carrier of a motor-cycle again. If I am not mistaken, this method of travel is called a 'joy ride,' and is much affected by young couples who are not averse to each other's society, but for my own part I found the joy purely imaginary, but the grief and woe intensely real. However, 'tis past, and my outraged nerves have recovered something of their original equanimity. Moreover, the pleasure and stimulus of intercourse with my friends of the Scottish Mission made possible by the 'joy journey' remain one of my happiest reminiscences.

It is a picturesque road which we follow from Livingstonia to Ekwendeni. We are environed by mountains, the track winding down the one slope, only to climb the next, and the throbbing machine dashing heedlessly through forests, across green plains and over bridges, while the mind of both driver and passenger are steadily fixed upon the white pathway before them. There are rivers to ford; and for two men to carry a hundred pound machine through a swift stream is no joke. There are steep hills to negotiate, when the passenger has to run on ahead, wait the approach of his steed, and then leap to the saddle with the agility of a circus-jockey. There are stretches of heavy sand to wade painfully through, with both driver and passenger pushing for all they are worth. But in the end the goal was attained, and we drove swiftly into Ekwendeni at half an hour after noon, having accomplished a trifle of seventy miles. Seventy miles!—a four days' march done in six hours! There 's no denying the fact that one gets over the ground at a rare pace with this style of steed.

At Ekwendeni we found Dr. Elmslie, who arrived in the country in 1884, and has many stirring things to tell of the early occupation, some of which have been gathered together in his book *Among the Wild Angoni*. The tribe which at present occupies these parts is the Ba-tumbuka, who speak a dialect differing from the Chi-nyanja much as Dutch differs from German. They were subdued in the early part of last century by the A-ngoni, an offshoot of the warlike Zulu race, but the conquerors came gradually to adopt the language of those whom they subjugated, and very little Zulu is spoken at the present day.

There is a fine church at Ekwendeni, with a square tower at one corner. Mounting this, we have unimpeded views in every direction over extensive plains covered with bush and grass, towards bare mountains to the south and the north, imparting a very karroo-like aspect to the whole scene. The interior of the church is in basilica style, and the pillars and Gothic architecture make a very noble impression on the mind. Seating accommodation there is none, for the native audience settles upon mats of local manufacture which cover the floor; and the result is not only more in keeping with native custom, but infinitely more pleasing and harmonious to the eye than when the worshippers are stiffly arranged on forms and

benches. In addition to the church there is a fine hospital, a roomy home for the ladies, a smaller dwelling for Dr. Elmslie (now alas! solitary, his wife and children being scattered in Scotland, Flanders, and India).

Seventy miles intervene between Ekwendeni and the next station in southerly direction, namely, Loudon. The scenery is not so varied nor so charming as that which we found further northwards. Castellated mountains and outcrops of rugged rock, the forests growing in a clayey soil, frequent watercourses which 'roll down golden sands,' but are devoid of gurgling waters — of such is the landscape composed through which we speed. We rush past Hora, the mountain of tragedy, to which in olden days the fugitive Tumbuka betook themselves, only to be lured to the fountains at its foot by the crafty A-ngoni, and massacred by the hundreds. At the end of fifty miles we reach the Government post Mzimba, on the banks of the river of that name. Here there are pleasant gardens and fertile orchards, and we are regaled by the hospitable wife of Mr. Macdonald, the resident, on fruit, and especially on strawberries, the finest, largest and most luscious that I have tasted. It is a great pleasure to be able to testify that at Mzimba, as indeed almost everywhere else in Nyasaland, the relations between the missionaries and the representatives of the Government are of the most cordial character.

When we sight Loudon station the first object which rivets our attention is the immense brick church, constructed to contain two thousand five hundred worshippers. It is too large and too flat to make a favourable impression when viewed from without, but on the inside the building, which is cruciform, fulfils all the canons of architectural beauty. The Gothic roof is supported on stable and graceful pillars; the windows are small and pointed, permitting the entrance of little more than 'a dim, religious light'; and the pulpit is in complete harmony with the whole structure. And when Mr. Donald Fraser, the missionary, tells us that he designed it all, and supervised its erection, one cannot withhold a tribute to his skill as an architect and his enterprise as a builder.

Though this great building accommodates two thousand five hundred worshippers, there are times when it cannot contain the numbers who come up to attend the communion festivals. It is Mr. Fraser's practice to hold a great convention once a

year, when Christians and class-members from every part of his extensive parish are expected to be present, and the numbers run to six thousand and seven thousand. On such occasions service is held on the broad lawn outside the north wall, against which a platform has been erected from which the immense assemblage is addressed. In addition to the church there are a hospital, schools, offices, and dwelling-houses, while the missionary-in-charge occupies a beautiful double-storied residence, the gift of a personal friend and supporter of the work.

It was both instructive and inspiring to meet Mr. Fraser and his gifted wife (the latter a fully qualified doctor), and to discuss with them many themes which bear on missionary life and practice. Mr. Fraser has elaborated a very complete organisation for overtaking all the demands which his vast field of labour makes. When we hear of a session that consists of seventy elders, and of a deacons' court with like numbers, we stand aghast, for few missionaries have courage enough or strength enough to undertake the oversight of such an extensive pastorate. Mr. Fraser is, however, ably seconded by the Rev. T. Cullen Young, and has likewise the assistance of two natives who have lately been ordained to the ministry.

Parting with regret from our friends at Loudon, we made a rapid run over a much improved road to Kasungu, where we were the guests of those most hospitable of all hospitable people, Dr. George Prentice and his wife. We have now passed out of the sphere of the Tumbuka and are among the A-chewa, one of the most numerous of the tribes inhabiting the Protectorate. The language spoken is that which is employed by the Dutch Reformed and Church of Scotland Missions further south, as well as (largely) by the Universities' Mission on the lake. The aspect of the country remains much the same as it has been hitherto—open bushy plains with great masses of rock thrusting themselves up through the surface, and forming a multitude of isolated kopjes. Game is very plentiful in this vicinity; and Dr. Prentice, who holds strong views as to the connection of game and the spread of sleep-sickness, has persuaded the Government into declaring the district around Kasungu a 'free shooting' area, with the result that a host of Nimrods has descended to work havoc among the zebra and the eland, the sable and roan and water-buck, that roam these plains and *dambos*.

Dr. Prentice is a man of multiple interests and varied activities—doctor, pastor, farmer, poultry-fancier, gardener, hunter, and bacteriologist. How so to divide a unit that each part shall be equal to the whole is a problem not yet compassed by the higher mathematics, but Dr. Prentice has arrived to within an inch of its solution. Viewing under the doctor's genial guidance the hospital, the cattle kraals, the donkey stables, the enclosures for poultry and for pigs, the dog-kennels, the dam in a neighbouring gully, the garden, the well, and the tank under construction for dipping cattle, we get an inkling of the complexity of a missionary's life and work. For the important schoolwork and for a goodly share of the pastoral work the Rev. Charles Stuart is responsible, and indeed without a division of labour the work which revolves round a station like this could never be satisfactorily performed.

On taking leave of the good friends at Kasungu I purposed making a detour by way of Kotakota, in order to see something of the work of the Universities' Mission before returning to the field of my own Church. I parted accordingly from my chauffeur, Mr. Retief, with profound gratitude that we had been able to do so much in so short a space of time, with profounder gratitude that life and limb were still intact, and with the profoundest gratitude of all that my acquaintance with the carrier of a Triumph 3¾ h.p. motor-cycle was finally and for ever ended. From the twentieth century I reverted to prehistoric times and to the primitive mode of journeying by machila. This was necessary because there was no road from Kasungu down to the lake shore along which a motor-cycle could travel, while the presence of fly made it impossible to utilise the donkey.

On the very morning on which I left Kasungu the rains, which up to that moment had kept off and allowed us to complete our trip northward in dry comfort, set in in full force. Inside my machila, protected by a stout piece of canvas, I was secure against the moisture, and my carriers were indifferent to the showers which descended. When once they had commenced, the rains came down with the greatest regularity. Of the first nine days of December only two were dry, while on several days we had downpours of true tropical severity. One bridgeless river, which normally was the veriest trickle of water, had changed to a roaring torrent when we

reached its banks, and we spent more than thirty minutes in cautiously wading through less than thirty yards of water. A porter who exercised less than the requisite amount of caution slipped off a rock into water that was up to his chin, and though I held my breath for the safety of my load, I joined a moment later in the general hilarity which greeted this bit of misadventure.

Kotakota, which I reached on the 4th December, lies, or is supposed to lie, upon the lake shore, but there is scarcely another station on its shores that has suffered so greatly from the rapid shrinkage to which Lake Nyasa has in recent years been subject. Formerly the lake steamers anchored just opposite the station; now they lie two and a half miles away, and the landing-place for the canoes that ply between the steamer and the shore is one and a half miles distant from the mission premises. Immediately in front of the station the water has receded five hundred yards, leaving a shallow gulf, beyond which stretches an immense peninsula of sand and brushwood, which is seldom covered even when the lake reaches its highest level in the rainy season. According to information supplied by one of the local missionaries, an old native testifies that his village (not far from Kotakota) was once on the lake shore, whereas now it lies a full three miles off. The shrinkage of Lake Nyasa is so marked, and has been so rapid in late years, that some authorities have ventured to postulate a subterranean channel through which the waters filter away; and, considering that the outflow *via* the Shire River has ceased, and the exit at Fort Johnston has silted up, there would seem to be some necessity for such a theory.

It was a great disappointment to me that circumstances made it impossible for me to visit Likoma island, the centre of the Universities' Mission. The Government had requisitioned the mission steamer for the transport of the South African contingent to the north end of the lake, and missionaries were sometimes delayed for weeks before a suitable opportunity offered to pass from Kotakota to Likoma or *vice versa*. I was therefore reluctantly compelled to forgo my visit to Likoma. At Kotakota, however, I was able to see the mission at work.

The mission buildings are arranged in such fashion as to form a quadrangle, the church being on the south side. The

schools during my visit were unfortunately closed for the Christmas vacation, but I saw some dispensing and surgical work performed by the ladies of the staff, there being just now no doctor. On the Sunday which I spent here I attended the forenoon service, which greatly interested me, unaccustomed as I am to the elaborate ritual which is here practised. The officiating priest, Mr. Oppermann, also delivered a simple homily, which, so far as I could follow it, was strictly evangelical in substance. When I took my departure on the Monday, it was with a feeling that (to paraphrase Philippians i. 18), 'whether by symbol or by plain truth, Christ is preached; and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice.'

A two days' journey by machila brought me to Nchisi, the most northerly of the stations in the Dutch Reformed field. The missionary had gone to Madzimoyo to attend a conference of deputies from the various congregations—a gathering which is in process of development towards a presbytery—and two ladies were holding the fort in his absence. Twelve years ago I was one of a party of two who were prospecting for a site in this vicinity for the establishment of a new station; and now I saw a work in full progress, with ramifications in every direction, and with seventy outposts controlled from the head station. My time at this place was exceedingly limited, and the little which I might have seen was reduced to practically nothing by incessant rain, so that we hardly ventured out of doors.

Passing on from here I travelled *via* Kongwe to the station which was formerly the heart of the mission, and gave it its distinctive name of 'the Mvera Mission.' It was here in 1890 that the banner of the Cross was first planted in Central Angoniland by Revs. A. C. Murray (now General Mission Secretary of the D.R. Church) and T. Vlok (at present in charge of the mission congregation at Salisbury). Twelve years ago Mvera was a hive of busy activities. It had the largest staff of any one station, with a hospital, a training-school for native teachers and evangelists, a distributing store, and industrial and educational departments. Now the hospital, the training-school and the industrial work have been removed to Mkoma, thirty miles to the south, and the store and printing-departments will soon follow. The choice of another station as headquarters of the mission was an act of necessity. Sleeping sickness, in the virulent form which

it has assumed in Nyasaland, made its appearance within a few miles of Mvera. The *glossina morsitans*, which has been shown to be *a* host (if not *the* host) of the trypanosome of this disease, has extended the scope of its ravages, and though formerly confined to the lake shore, has now approached to within six or seven miles of the station, and passers-by who come up from the port of Domira Bay frequently convey it right on to the station premises. With the fly so near at hand and such a constant menace to donkeys and to oxen —without which transport-animals the station cannot act as distributing centre—it became imperative to choose another head station, and Mkoma was selected.

On the summit of a neighbouring hill called Kaso are to be found the genial and beloved William H. Murray, chairman of the Executive Council and practical head of the Mission, with his hospitable spouse. Mr. Murray has been engaged for years upon an important enterprise, the translation of the Scriptures into Chi-nyanja. The New Testament and Psalms have been already published, and many editions have been sold in Nyasaland; while the bulk of the Old Testament is ready, and the whole work is likely to be completed by 1918. The work is very carefully done. A joint Translation Committee of members representing the various missions interested, revises the translation done by Mr. Murray (with the assistance of some two or three collaborators), and only after thorough discussion of proposed corrections and emendations, does the final revision find its way to the printers.

Thirty miles south of Mvera, under a lofty granite mountain, is situated Mkoma, which is now the headquarters of the D.R. Mission. This station is in process of construction, and already possesses a church, roomy and serviceable, but on nothing like the same scale, either for size or architecture, as the edifices at Kondowi, Ekwendeni, and Loudon; a training school for native evangelists and teachers; the nucleus of a fine hospital; and several substantial and picturesque dwelling-houses for the staff. Irrigation works have been commenced, and water is conveyed by pipes to the homes of the missionaries, but the station has not yet arrived at the dignity of electric lights. There is an expert who controls the agricultural undertakings, and a builder and carpenter, from whose workshop issue excellent pieces of furniture to supply the various homes, this furniture being made by native handi-

craftsmen from indigenous timber that has been felled in the forests and locally prepared.

There was a large congregation of workers at the time of my visit. The annual meeting of the Executive was due. There is nothing like attendance at a meeting like this if one desires to obtain a thorough insight into the work of the mission and its diversity of methods. The Council sat for six days, the work of each day being introduced by a short devotional session, which greatly aided in preserving the spirit of unity and brotherliness. The three most important subjects with which the meeting was called to deal were, the devising of plans for building and extension, the placing of workers for the coming year, and the estimates. The discussion on these three matters, with the subordinate issues arising from them, took up nine-tenths of the time. The Council in the field is allowed a very wide jurisdiction by the Committee at the home base, since the latter recognises that the men on the spot are far better able to judge of the needs of the work and of the best way of meeting those needs, than a body of men two thousand miles away.

One day was set aside for the consideration of subjects of practical interest and urgency which had no place in the regular programme, and for myself I can sincerely say that I found the discussion singularly illuminating. Questions like these were propounded and replied to: 'Of what nature should our instruction of the class-members be?' *i.e.* pedagogic, aiming not so much at imparting knowledge as at building character. 'What is the work of the senior evangelists?' *i.e.* of those men who, having passed through the regulation course, are looking forward to being licensed. 'What use ought to be made of special evangelistic services?' 'Of what nature should the missionary's visit to his outstations be?' 'How can we cultivate a more regular and more earnest study of the Bible on the part of our native Christians?'

Many of the suggestions made were of the utmost value to workers old and new. 'Instruction in the baptism class is almost the most important part of our work, and the missionary may in no case delegate it to another.' 'Let the body of Christians as a whole be responsible for the admission of individuals to baptism; the missionary can easily find out what a candidate for baptism knows, but only his fellow-

townsman can tell what he really is.' 'The missionary is called to impart himself to his evangelists and teachers; through them he imparts himself to the people.' 'Let your teachers learn that they must impart knowledge and not hold edifying homilies to their pupils.' 'Special evangelistic services should be held at older centres and not at stations that have been newly opened.' 'When called to administer rebuke, do so in love, with sympathy for human weakness, and only after much prayer.'

The meeting of the Council came to an end at between eleven and twelve on the 23rd December, and many of the brethren at once saddled their donkeys and travelled all night, and probably far into the following day, in order to reach their homes in time for Christmas. All who were present would probably agree in saying that it was a happy and inspiring time. The fellowship with kindred spirits who are engaged in the same great work and struggling with the same thwarting difficulties, and the communion of souls who are bound together by a common faith, a common service, and a common love to one Lord and Master, cannot but have a heartening influence. And so we went our ways with new visions before our eyes, and a new courage and determination in our hearts.

At the other stations of the Mission I spent but a brief time. Two of them lay over the border, in Portuguese Nyasaland. The workers there are facing peculiar difficulties. The Government has permitted the Mission to enter, but the permission has been accorded in a somewhat half-hearted fashion; and even now the Government is highly sensitive and suspicious, and apt to take alarm at incidents and influences which would not disturb the equanimity of a greater power. In spite, however, of adverse circumstances, the D.R. Mission has gained a footing in Portuguese Nyasaland, and is now labouring at four chief centres. The language is the same as that spoken in the rest of the Nyasa mission field, and the people call themselves A-chewa like those living further north. The population is very heavy, and the work promises well. A great extension of influence may be anticipated so soon as the Government has succeeded in overcoming its suspicion of out-school labour, and permits the erection of more outposts under native supervision.

Passing rapidly by the stations Mpunzi and Mlanda, both

situated in a well-watered country, dominated by huge mountains of granite, I carry my readers with me into the valley of the Shire River, which, formerly the outlet of Lake Nyasa to the Zambesi, has now degenerated into a mere magnified swamp, a series of pools and watery depths that still harbour crocodiles and fish. Twelve years ago the passage of this stream was a different matter to what it is now. The river then was narrow and ran with a swift, deep current. To-day the surface of the water is overgrown with reed and water-plants, and the ferryman poles heavily through an obstructing mass, which looks so treacherous and grows so rank, as if it were determined to embrace and detain us for ever.

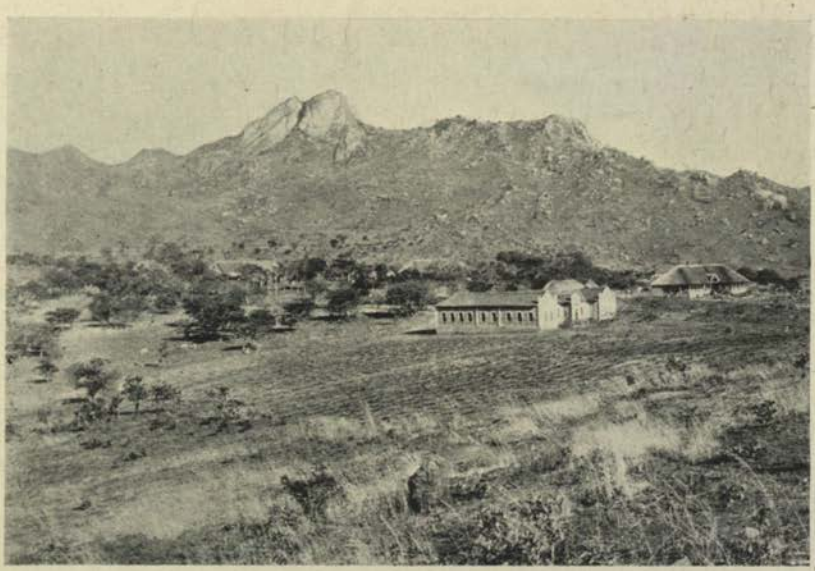
Scattered throughout the valley of the upper Shire lie the stations and out-stations of the Zambesi Industrial Mission and the Nyasa Industrial Mission. These missions are feeling very severely the stress of the European war, and the staff on the field is now reduced to its narrowest limits. I was able to visit three stations of the former of these bodies, and must bear witness to the remarkable enterprise which I saw displayed. Many acres of forest have been cleared and brought under cultivation, and the past season's yield of coffee at the Chiole station alone amounted to eighteen tons. These industrial missions are also doing excellent spiritual work. Our Dutch Reformed missionary at Salisbury, Mr. Vlok, whose labour lies among the many hundreds of Nyasa natives who flock southwards for work and wages, reports that of the adherents of the many missions in the Protectorate, the boys of the Zambesi Industrial Mission stand first in obedience, deference, and general trustworthiness. To this testimony I need not add one word: there could be no higher encomium on the work of this mission.

A long uphill pull of thirty miles from the Shire River brings you to the Shire highlands, and to Blantyre, the commercial capital of this region, as Zomba is the political capital. Blantyre is a charming place. The plateau on which it is situated lies three thousand five hundred feet above the sea, and the climate is therefore sufficiently salubrious. The township has been built on a number of slight eminences, streets have been constructed and planted with gums and other varieties of trees, both of native and of foreign growth. The white population numbers over two hundred, and trade,

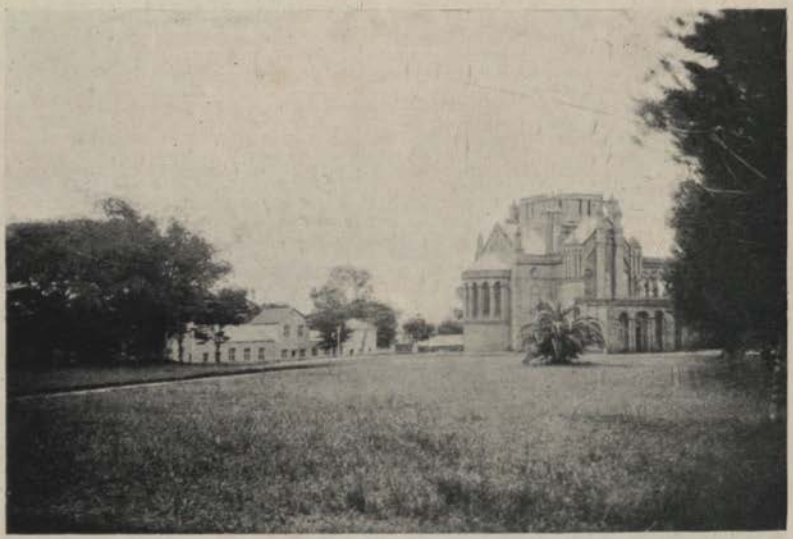
NATIVE WEAVER AND LOOM (BELGIAN CONGO)

THE SHIRE RIVER AT PORT HERALD

(Women fetching water)



MKOMA STATION OF THE DUTCH REFORMED MISSION (NYASALAND)



BLANTYRE CHURCH (CHURCH OF SCOTLAND MISSION, NYASALAND)

of which a goodly proportion is in the hands of Arabs and Indians, is constantly expanding in volume. A railway of something over a hundred miles connects the place with Port Herald, and there is an extension to Chindio, the latter place lying on the Zambesi seventy miles south of Port Herald.

The most interesting spot in Blantyre, even to the traveller who has no interest in missions, is the area occupied by the church and other buildings of the Established Church of Scotland. This mission, commenced in 1876 and reorganised in 1881, has had some very remarkable men on its list of missionaries, among whom it is sufficient to mention the name of Dr. David Clement Scott, author of *A Cyclopædic Dictionary of the Manganja Language* (one of the finest dictionaries on a Bantu language that has ever been published), but more famous still as architect and builder of the Blantyre church. This edifice is the most beautiful structure which I have seen in Central Africa. There are many larger churches, and there are places of worship, Catholic and Anglican, with more ornate interiors, but there is none in which all the elements that go to make a Gothic church—towers and domed roof, buttresses, pointed windows and semi-circular apse—are so harmoniously combined. And when we remember that the designer of this edifice was not a professional architect, but merely a missionary turned architect for the nonce, and that he had to rely not on skilled workmen, but on the raw labour of Central Africa, the marvel grows that such a structure was ever completed, and stands undamaged and unscathed until the present day.

The *doyen* of the missionaries is Dr. Alexander Hetherwick, beloved of his colleagues and respected throughout the length and breadth of Nyasaland, a man who has grown grey in the service of the Mission. Dr. Hetherwick is the author of grammars of the Yao and Nyanja languages, and is an acknowledged authority on matters linguistic and ethnological. To have, as I had, the privilege of residing under his roof for several days and of holding converse with him on various questions appertaining to the cause to which he has devoted his life, is a liberal missionary education.

Dr. Hetherwick had much to tell concerning the Chilembwe rebellion, which had occurred about a twelvemonth earlier. This was a rising of natives who had been instigated thereto by John Chilembwe, a native born in these parts, who had been

to America for his education. The outbreak of the world-conflict in Europe, and the temporary absence of native troops, made Chilembwe deem this a fit opportunity for the realisation of schemes which had long been maturing in his mind, and which aimed at the overthrow of the European power, and the erection of a great native state of which he was to be the head. At the first outburst of this rebellion three white planters were murdered, families were compelled to flee, property was destroyed, and the white community everywhere reduced to a state very nearly approaching panic. But the Europeans soon got together an armed force, Chilembwe's following was dispersed without trouble, and Chilembwe himself killed. A Commission was then appointed by the Government to examine into the causes and motives of the rising, and many of the planters whose feelings towards missions are indifferent or antagonistic cherished the hope that it would be shown that the teachings of the missionaries induced a spirit of independence and insubordination on the part of the natives, and were indirectly responsible for the Chilembwe outbreak. The report of the Commission has since appeared, and has completely exonerated the old-established missions of being in any way accountable for the rising, but the commissioners mention as one of the contributory causes of the rising 'the establishment of certain European and American missions in the Protectorate, of which the so-called Church of Christ Mission and the Seventh Day Baptist Mission may be taken as types. These are small missions insufficiently financed, conducted by unsuitable persons, and under no proper control. As a rule they hold some doctrines which run counter to ordinary ideas and tend to unsettle the native mind: such, for instance, are the doctrines that Saturday is the divinely appointed day of rest, and that the end of the world is at hand. The missionaries are men of narrow views, the system of church government is very loose, and no effective discipline is exercised.'

In the recommendations which the commissioners make in this connection they suggest, *inter alia*, 'the examination by Government of the credentials of religious sects which seek to be established in the Protectorate, and the exclusion of those which are likely from any cause to lead to disaffection or unrest among the native population': and also, 'some form of control for independent native churches, and the

suppression of such as are proved to be disseminating unsettling or seditious political doctrines.'

To one like myself who was born near the eastern frontier of the Cape Colony at a time when alarms of Kaffir wars were matters of everyday occurrence, it seems as though the white population of the Protectorate were thrown into a very great fright over a very little thing. The Chilembwe rising was badly organised, and, thanks especially to the staunch loyalty of the adherents of the older missions, feebly supported. The report of the Commission seems to be an impartial document, and makes some suggestions which may be acted upon with benefit to all parties concerned. There is, however, one paragraph to which I have no doubt the Presbyterian missions of Nyasaland will take the strongest exception. The paragraph I refer to runs as follows: '44. There is a certain danger that in the absence of adequate supervision religious instruction may possibly be made a vehicle for undesirable political propaganda by native teachers. In the Roman Catholic and Anglican missions this danger does not exist to the same extent, owing to the nature of the religious teaching entrusted to native teachers.' This paragraph, in effect, praises the religious teaching of Catholics and Anglicans, and condemns by implication that of the Protestant churches. One would like to read the evidence upon which this extraordinary section of the report of the commissioners is founded. What is 'the nature of the religious teaching entrusted to native teachers' by, for example, the Roman Catholic Church? It is, obedience to the Pope of Rome as spiritual *and temporal* head of the Church. Unless the Roman Catholic priests, and their ancillary teachers, are inculcating this doctrine, they are acting disloyally towards their Church and its supreme Pontiff. Place over against this the teaching of Protestants who, in obedience to the command of the New Testament, inculcate submission to the powers that be, and instruct their converts to pray 'for kings and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life.' How does this compare with Roman Catholic teaching, and does not section 44 of the report give the impression that the commissioners have gone out of their way to pat the Anglican and Catholic bodies on the back, while leaving the other denominations under a cloud of undeserved and unjust suspicion?

A very few words must suffice to bring the narrative of this

tour to a close. I left Blantyre on the 14th January 1916, and reached Cape Town eleven days later—very nearly a record journey. The distance is none so great, but it is a most difficult matter to catch the connections. In this respect I was greatly favoured, in partial compensation, I suppose, for the many vexatious delays to which I was subject during the rest of my tour. The train on which we left Blantyre caught its connection on the river, and the *Bruce*, steaming over a flooded river, accomplished the journey to Chinde in forty-eight hours. On reaching the mouth of the Zambesi—the date was the 17th January—we found a Portuguese steamer just about to leave for Beira, *via* Quilimane, boarded her, and reached Beira in the early morning of the 20th January. The bi-weekly train for Cape Town was due to depart that very morning, so I hastened ashore, caught the train, and running steadily through, with short delays at Salisbury and at Kimberley, arrived in Cape Town on the 25th January.

When I disembarked from the river-boat *Bruce* on the 17th January I completed my third traverse of the continent. It was thirteen months to a day since my arrival at Mombasa at the end of my first crossing. I need not say much about the voyage on the Zambesi, which I described twelve years ago in my *Thousand Miles in the Heart of Africa*. The Shire has some stretches of quiet beauty, especially in the vicinity of Mount Morumbala; but the banks of the Zambesi, after the wooded Congo, the steep-banked Kasai and the game-haunted Lualaba, were hopelessly flat and uninteresting. I found nothing without to hold my attention, and therefore plunged into a perusal of the *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay*, while with every page my wonder grew at the extraordinary memory, the extraordinary style, and the extraordinary accuracy of the subject of the memoirs.

The boat which bore us from Chinde to Beira was a Portuguese vessel, the *Manica*. The authorities in charge of the commissariat were determined that we should not suffer hunger, and seven times a day, no less, we were summoned in incomprehensible Portuguese to partake of some manner of refreshment. Now I am an excellent sailor, and no ocean passage, whether rough or smooth, has ever interfered with my appetite; but I confess that during the three days of our sojourn on the *Manica* the only food which I really enjoyed was the tea and biscuits. Everything else was anathema

to me; for the Portuguese have a habit of anointing their viands with oil, which I cannot away with. For those who like that sort of thing, of course, that is the sort of thing they will like. But I most emphatically do not like that sort of thing, nor does that sort of thing like me; so you can imagine that I had a 'pretty thin time of it,' as the slang expression of our day has it. Nor were the pangs of hunger effectually allayed until I boarded the train at Beira, and found an excellent dining-car attached, where meals were served in good colonial fashion, without extraneous aids to digestion derived from the castor-oil plant and the cod-fish.

The two-thousand-mile journey from Beira to Cape Town passed without incident, and it speaks volumes for the state of perfection which our railways have reached, when I say that we arrived at our destination a minute or two before scheduled time. The scenery between Beira and the border of Rhodesia is exceedingly fine, especially in the vicinity of Amatongas. The rains were at their height as we steamed through Mashonaland, and some severe showers overtook us. On passing into Matabeleland we found ourselves in a drier climate. Rain was absent; the grass, though green, was not luxuriant; the forests displayed a duller, greyer hue than those which we had passed on the way from Beira to Umtali. And the further south we steamed, the drier were the meteorological conditions, till in the far south a terrible drought was prevalent, having for its consequences the death of thousands of sheep and cattle, and the utter impoverishment of numbers of white families.

When I stepped out of the train at Cape Town in the early morning of 25th January 1916, there were some personal friends to welcome me, and the inevitable interviewer to corner me for an appointment. But I had already learned to take the evil which this life yields with the good, and indeed, in the joy and gratitude of a safe return home I looked, I am sure, with a kindly eye on the interviewer. Thus ended my enterprise. I had been two years and two months *en route*, and had covered in round numbers seventeen thousand miles, of which I did approximately two thousand on foot and the rest by the various means of transit which I have described in a previous chapter. *Cui bono*? will be the question on many lips. What has the undertaking effected? What are the results of the two years' tour?

I cannot point to any scientific gains; I have no archæological finds to chronicle; the geographical results are nil; and the ethnological data are of very slight value. But remember, good friends, that this was no thoroughly equipped and well-financed scientific expedition: it was merely the private undertaking of a humble individual whose interest was primarily missionary. As such let it be judged. I aim at nothing but to kindle a warmer interest in the Continent of Darkness, over which, thank God, the light is now breaking. I aim at nothing but to waken slumbering consciences to a realisation of responsibility towards the teeming millions of this land. And most fervently do I hope and pray that the Church of Christ may be roused to new and hitherto unexampled efforts to reach out to those who are bound in oppression and iron. The command of our Lord constrains us, the condition of the heathen implores us, the peril of our own souls warns us, and the success of past efforts encourages us, to 'see this war through,' to complete what we have begun, and to carry the great enterprise to a glad consummation. Then indeed

> 'the millions who are gazing
> Sadly upon us from afar, shall smile,
> And unto God devout thanksgiving raising,
> Bless us the while.'

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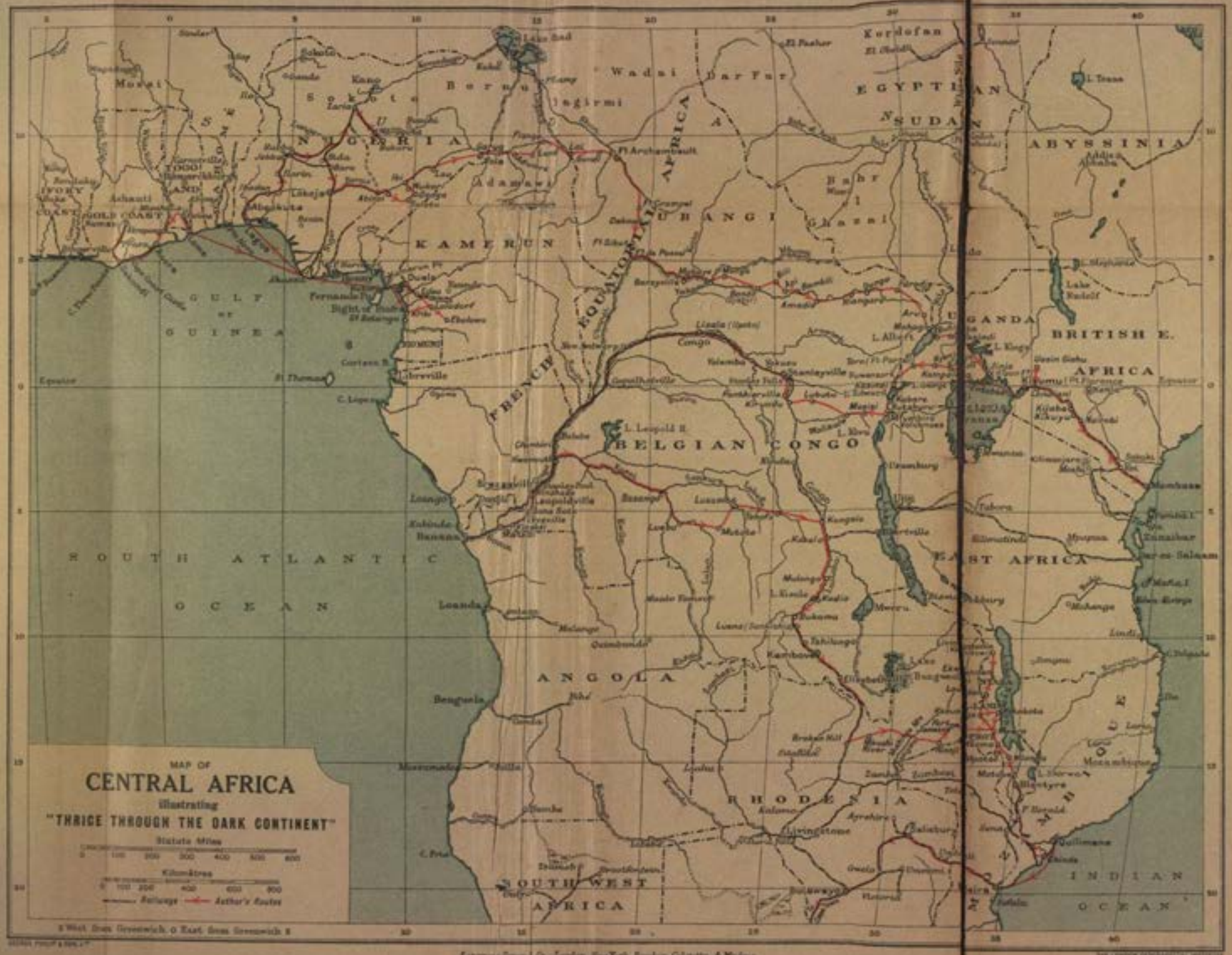


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